



# The Clearing House

*A journal for modern junior and senior high schools*

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# Curriculum Research:

*Biggest responsibility of every teacher*

By

EDGAR M. DRAPER

CURRICULUM research presents an opportunity to the classroom teacher. It is a problem for the reasons that, first, educational progress, as well as good teaching in the future, will be intimately related to teacher research in the curriculum field, and second, so much has been accomplished by so few in the field of curriculum research to date.

While extensive research projects have been carried on by the teachers in all types of schools and colleges in the past two decades, it would be incorrect to suggest that any large per cent of teachers at any level has either the training or the time for this highly professional work.

It may appear incongruous to discuss the teacher's place in research work when we consider first, that this year in any number of states, teachers who have had only a high-school education and six or eight weeks of professional training at a teacher-training institution are being employed; second, that many teachers completed such minimum requirements years ago, and, since receiving their life certification based on these minimum requirements, have done little if any professional or academic work; and third, that many teachers are being retained in our schools for the coming year simply because no adequate retirement

system for teachers has been developed in many of the states.

Everyone will agree that higher certification standards, accompanied by increased salaries, reasonable teaching loads in terms of pupil hours per day, and an adequate retirement system are essential prerequisites for the development of any professional program for teachers in the field of curriculum research.

While problems facing American education in terms of child growth and development would be insurmountable if it were necessary to leave them to the groups already mentioned, it is heartening to note that in certain states such as Washington, California, and New York, the pre-service training of teachers includes five years of professional and academic work at the secondary level and four years of professional and academic work, leading to the B.A. degree, at the elementary level. It is also stimulating to know that special certificates are being issued in administration, supervision, guidance, health, library, recreation, and other special types of services at both levels. Research work in the curriculum field in the immediate future will have to depend largely upon the leadership and the efforts of these highly trained people.

In order that the implications of cur-

riculum research for the teacher may be apparent it is essential that we define the term "curriculum." In the past this term has had various connotations and even at the present time professional people are not in agreement concerning its meaning.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century the curriculum was defined largely in terms of subject matter, and research projects were instituted by college professors, who were writing the textbooks for the public schools, in order to determine what words should be included in the speller, what problems and exercises in the arithmetic, and what stories were suited to the readers at particular grade levels. The teacher's task in curriculum improvement at that time was to assist in the selection of the textbook, to assign the lesson, and to motivate and evaluate students in the acquisition of a mastery of the content.

The second stage, which began about 1920, introduced the course of study in American schools. The early courses of study merely outlined the subject matter to be taught and made some suggestions regarding effective methods or procedures in stimulating pupils to acquire the mastery of the content, which was outlined to conform to a selected text, or to several texts in the optimum situation. Small committees of teachers worked very hard to produce helpful and effective courses of study and those who participated undoubtedly developed professionally. Unfortunately, the great majority of the teachers did not have an opportunity to participate in course-of-study construction and, as a result, there was little more professional growth for teachers in basing their classwork on a course of study and a textbook rather than on the textbook. The child or the student was not the center of the program in either case; the emphasis was on formal subject matter and formal classroom procedure.

The curriculum is often defined today as

the total learning experiences which pupils have in and out of school under the guidance of the faculty. It is the result of the interaction of many important factors such as subject matter, the social and the physical environment, the beliefs, knowledges, attitudes, and skills of both teachers and pupils, and the abilities, interests, backgrounds, and understandings of both teachers and pupils.

Formal procedure has tended to be replaced by liberal and democratic relationships in the classroom as the interests and concerns of students have been given prominence. Initiative, enterprise, problem-solving, and cooperative efforts have superseded rote learning on the part of pupils. An integrated approach, based on a wide range of activities and projects, has made possible an appreciation of the interests and needs of pupils on the part of teachers which was not inherent in programs emphasizing merely subject matter.

When the curriculum is considered from the standpoint of the growth and development of pupils many opportunities exist for the development of research projects. These research studies will be concerned with the enrichment of learning experiences, the social situation, and the study of the growth and development of students. The more advanced and worthwhile studies will be developed around not one, but an integration of all three of these important factors.

A practical approach to the development of research in the field of the curriculum must be formulated in terms of the training of the faculty, the interest and present needs of pupils, the buildings, facilities, and supplementary materials with which to expand the textbook horizon of the pupils, leadership in the supervisory and administrative staffs, special services in such fields as health and guidance, and the extension of the classroom into the community and the state.

Many teachers on a given level from the kindergarten to the junior college do not know what is expected of children on the other levels and do not appreciate the need for studying the growth patterns and achievement of the pupils coming to them each year. There can be considerable overlapping of objectives as well as great gaps in experiences which make for a low quality of learning on the part of all pupils. These situations make for confusion and lack of understanding on the part of both teachers and pupils.

It is of great significance that the pupil usually brings to the new teacher and the class only his academic grades and a few scattered facts relating to his health, his intelligence quotient, and his family. There is scant if any information concerning his adjustments in the previous class, his relationships to the teacher and the pupils in the class, his participation in school and out-of-school activities, his interests, drives, or enthusiasms for particular academic and non-academic activities. There are many teachers who are not interested in such data and who would not utilize the information for the adjustment of the pupils if it were available.

Research in the field of student growth and development is postulated on the premise that each teacher is familiar with the general patterns of physical, mental, and emotional maturation. It also implies that each pupil must be studied as an individual in terms of these patterns, and adaptations must be provided to realize the potentialities of all of the students in their growth and development as normal persons.

Promotion from grade to grade or advancement from class to class, and all that it implies in terms of the sequence of academic and non-academic activities, must be studied by all of the teachers having contact with the pupil. The uniform class procedure and the uniform curriculum for all pupils in any class will not stand up

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

*"Curriculum research is the basis of good teaching, and is the most important responsibility of every teacher," states Dr. Draper. He explains the kinds of curriculum research that classroom teachers are qualified to conduct, and the results that can be achieved in their schools through their contributions. The author is professor of secondary education and curriculum in the College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle 5, Wash.*

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under the close scrutiny and study of the development of the pupils by the teachers. Each student must be regarded as an individual having certain potentialities and his own maturation rate.

An example of the study and research in the development of children is in the field of reading where it is now an accepted practice to permit the child to select his own time for the beginning of formal reading. Much has been written and spoken concerning "reading readiness." It is just as true, however, that maturation levels are attained by individual children for entrance into other types of formalized work and drill.

"Readiness" is a term that can be utilized at the high-school and college levels as well as in the first years of the primary school.

In order that adjustments can be made in the curriculum program of the school it is necessary for the teacher to know the techniques which can be utilized in a study of the drives, impulses, and tendencies of each student so that a pattern of work can be formulated for him. At the present time, teachers are making studies of the behavior of children at all grade levels in order to determine their needs, interests, and problems. These studies utilize certain research procedures familiar to the social worker and

the educator, such as observation, the case study, the checklist, the questionnaire, and the interview.

When data have been secured through these techniques, the most difficult work of the teachers must be undertaken in the determination of the adjustments, which should be made in the curriculum in order to meet the individual needs of the pupils.

It is at this point that curriculum research is breaking down in the schools at the present time. The teacher is presented with a curriculum for a particular grade or class and feels that it is his responsibility to see that each student acquires a mastery of it during the semester or year. On the other hand, if the teacher has made a study of the pupils in the class, he has found, no doubt, that a number of them will not be interested in certain aspects of the material as outlined, will have very little need for various units of it, and will find no stimulus in the academic approach contemplated by the school or college authorities.

How can the teacher be freed to teach students rather than subject matter exclusively? Any meeting of educators will emphasize the approach based on a study of student growth and development, but few consider the implications of this approach in a practical situation. The task of meeting the needs of forty pupils in a classroom so that they are successfully integrating their personalities in terms of relating all phases of their environment, including the curriculum, to their developmental patterns is a staggering problem when the teacher has been handed a "must be completed curriculum" containing few suggestions for meeting the needs of the individual child.

The most important concept in the child growth and development theory of curriculum enrichment is that the pupil learns as a whole child. Any phase or type of learning must fit into his total pattern of growth. There are no special or unique learnings in fields such as skills, understandings, or

appreciations which are not immediately incorporated into his total growth pattern. For this reason, research for the staff members in the future will be in the area of relating phases or aspects of the curriculum in order that this integrative process can be promoted in the students.

The pupils' daily program is often broken up into many artificial learning periods. Little attempt is made to draw several fields of human knowledge together to get better answers to questions asked by pupils or presented by teachers. Teachers go from a period in reading to a period in social studies without relating the objectives of reading to the objectives of social studies. Learning cannot be regulated by the ringing of a bell or the ticking of a clock. It must give full consideration to the relatedness of things to be learned and problems to be solved.

The participation of the learner is basic in the learning process. Learning is an outgrowth of an active, not a passive situation. It is the effort and participation of the individual that is fundamental in his growth and development. Teachers are inclined to do many of the things that students should do for themselves. Teachers who fear pupils may make a mistake should be stimulated to let pupils try out and learn new and better ways of cooperating in the problems of the classroom.

As long as teachers do the assigning and ask the questions, the pupil has little opportunity to learn through participation. Pupils need to be guided into ever higher levels of self-directed participation. The role of the teacher needs to be one of guiding, encouraging, and evoking the best efforts of every student. Condemning mistakes and frowning on inadequate answers only slows up and inhibits maximum learning.

The total, over-all pattern of participation is also very important. Objectives must be clearly stated and understood so that the

pupil will have an overview of what the group is moving toward and what his school is attempting to realize. He should then see where his contribution fits into the total scheme of things. This adds meaning to what he is attempting to do and gives direction to his efforts.

The best learning will result when a *variety of approaches and materials is utilized*. There should be opportunities for many first-hand experiences, such as work experience, meetings with resource persons, and use of visual and auditory aids. Even when these resources are easily available too few teachers avail themselves of their use; too often the pupil has only a textbook to stimulate his interest and ability.

Skills are best learned when short-time meaningful drill is developed along with the actual application of the skill. When actual situations are utilized, the time element can be reduced and the mastery can become much more complete. Rote learning is wasteful of time and effort while meaningful practice for short periods of time has proved very effective. The best results will come when the learner is concerned about his attainments and desires to improve his work.

The specific types of curriculum research which can be utilized by teachers are best illustrated for our purposes by referring to the specific opportunities presented in any school system. It is essential that the staff as a whole agree upon the basic principles to be achieved in the growth patterns of the students. This statement of principles, if sufficiently expanded, could become a philosophy of education. The work at this stage is not entirely of the research type although extensive studies should be made of the literature in the field, the patterns developed in other institutions, and the activities of the graduates in their field of endeavor. Each staff member should participate in the work and should be in agreement with the findings after many round-

table discussions of their implications.

As soon as the basic principles have been developed, it will be possible to determine the objectives of various phases of the educational program. These should be stated in terms of the student and those which are related should be brought together later in the organization of courses of study. As objectives are organized in courses of study, further relationships will be noted between the various courses as certain objectives appear to have a place in more than one course of study. Mutual understanding of the learning experiences to be developed in courses having common objectives will eliminate overlapping of work and the frustration of pupils. It will also serve as an integrating force in the curriculum of the school system and will stimulate normal growth patterns in the pupils.

The allocation of objectives to the various courses of study will make it possible for units of work to be developed. Each objective will usually indicate a unit of work and these units can then be arranged in a sequential pattern of development for the pupils. The work of the unit can be broken down into specific objectives, each constituting a problem or a project of the unit. The teacher should construct a resource unit preliminary to the development of the learning unit for use in the class.

Each specific objective or problem should be organized so that the learning experiences indicated for the student and the teaching procedures utilized by the teachers can be shown in relationship to each other. Learning experiences will include readings in assigned and in supplementary materials; investigations by individuals or committees of pupils; excursions; visual and auditory aids; laboratory or clinical work; and round-table or panel discussions by student groups. Teaching procedures will include specific assignments to reference materials; planning and organizing individual and group research projects; planning for and



summarizing the results of excursions; indicating visual materials and other types of supplementary materials in relationship to the learning experiences of the pupils; adjusting the work equitably; and adapting the various phases of the work to the needs and interests of the pupils.

At the conclusion of each unit of work the teacher will have need to evaluate the growth of the pupils as a result of the learning experiences developed throughout the unit. Some plans for evaluation will be very informal and will include conferences with the pupils for the purpose of discussing the various papers and bibliographies which they have developed in various phases of the work; noting their ability to work with groups; and assaying their social adjustment and their cooperative attitude in attacking a problem. Other types of evaluating will be more formal and will consist of both objective and informal tests.

The teacher also will have occasion to evaluate the various aspects of the unit of work at the conclusion of the course. The pupils can render valuable assistance in such evaluations and their cooperation should be sought. The continuous revision of the resource unit by the teacher will assist in evaluation of the unit of work.

Curriculum research is the basis of good teaching, and is the most important responsibility of every teacher. It is not an activity to be developed spasmodically whenever the staff has a particular urge to improve the curriculum, but it is an essential phase of teaching and, as such, must be a continuing phase of the work of the instructor.

The study of pupils, the development of the basic principles of the curriculum, the formulating of the objectives of the courses of study, the planning of the learning experiences of the pupils, the comparison of teaching procedures which may be utilized by the instructor, the evaluation of student growth in the class, and the evaluation of the units of work making up the course of study present continuous research projects for the staff member.

Any teacher engaged in such research studies will tend to stimulate his students to research work on their level and the morale of the class will be greatly improved. A teacher who is professionally growing through research activities in curriculum will be a real stimulation to pupils and his efforts will pay rich dividends to himself and the students who are privileged to work with him.



## Celestial English Teachers

What is it in private-school English-teachers, I ask, that makes them rank themselves as the secret custodians of education, the foremost moulders of the young mind, and the spiritual guardians of youth? Oh, let the algebra teacher teach algebra; let the chemistry teacher unroll his strange formulas and combustive laboratory experiments; let the Latin teacher mumble through his drills and cough out rules for the subjunctive: but the English teacher!—good Lord, NO! Shocking indeed that *he* should concern himself only with reading and writing! *He* must go beyond the stilted requirements! *He* must lead his students to the True, the Beautiful, the Good. *He* must elevate their souls. *He* is Shakespeare, Plato, St. Francis, Edmund Wilson.

Indeed, *he* is omniscient!  
*He* is God.

Now, why is it that this divine privilege is reserved only for English teachers?

After all, to be God and to teach spelling at the same time is a job more than dual. In the first place (and the first place is enough), if our English teacher is a God, he is no longer only an English teacher. There are, you know, other celestial obligations.

I propose, therefore, that the Gods move out of the classrooms and that teachers move in. I propose a shocking proposal: I propose that English teachers teach English.—GEORGE W. TAYLOR in *The Independent School Bulletin*.

# The Physically Handicapped Teacher

*He may be an asset  
to your faculty*

By

CHARLES L. SWICK

THE RECENT war and the more recent polio epidemic have set me to wondering about how handicapped school teachers are faring. Is there a physically handicapped teacher on your faculty? Well, there is one on ours, and I'm it, or rather he.

Thirty-five years on a crutch haven't been quite so funny as the old simile would have it, but a crutch has not interfered too much with my teaching; in fact my teaching is better because of it. It would be pleasant to shock you by saying that I'm a coach, but truth compels me to admit that I teach English. My hope is, however, that enlightenment soon reaches the higher echelons of education to the extent that some ex-G. I. can pen an epic entitled "Coaching on a Crutch."

The public schools' insistence on absolute normality often results in obtaining mediocrity instead—not in appearance only but often in accomplishment as well. I remember, when I applied twenty years ago for admission to a teachers college, the stiff objections raised to my being accepted. I have reasons to believe that the policy of keeping out the handicapped has not materially changed since that time. Had it not been for the friendly exertions of one of my teachers and my principal, I would not have been admitted to college.

After graduation I returned to begin my teaching career in the high school where I had been a pupil. But I often speculate about the chances I would have had in a school system where I was not known. And that was back in '33 when any teaching job was hard to come by. Remember?

I have no statistics to back me up (this is not objective reporting), but isn't it rather certain that many fine potential teachers are turned away from the public schools by administrators whose jaundiced eyes readily detect a physical handicap in an applicant, but who fail to see other qualities that would make for good teaching? What about polio victims—especially those who had been preparing for a teaching career, or those preparing for some other profession but who will now have to do something less strenuous? Will they be welcomed into teaching or will they be turned aside diplomatically by someone who can see in them their negative but not positive potentialities?

And what of the thousands of young men home from the wars, those men who are not victims of battle fatigue or war-born neuroses but who may now have a twisted arm or walk with a leg in a brace?

Is there one on your faculty?

Paradoxically, the one frailty for which many teachers are turned down may be the finest attribute in that person's total contribution as a teacher. I say that a physically handicapped teacher is in an envied position when it comes to "teaching" tolerance, or the acceptance of the different, to young people, many of whom are callous or at least unconcerned. In the democratic society the handicapped teacher can do much to develop an understanding or appreciative attitude toward those with physical disabilities.

The handicapped teacher may be instructing classes in science, math, or English,



## EDITOR'S NOTE

*For the past 35 years, Mr. Swick, a high-school English teacher, has used crutches. He believes that CLEARING HOUSE readers will be interested in his experiences as a physically handicapped teacher, and in his reasons for maintaining that such teachers may prove to be an asset on the faculty. He teaches in Saratoga Springs, N. Y., High School.*

but he is really teaching tolerance, and the young person who has learned to accept and understand the abnormal has gone a long way on the journey of growing up. That is to say, he is being educated.

Years ago I had in a class of mine a good looking boy who was a talented artist. He also limped, not badly but noticeably. His lameness, added to an unhappy family background, had turned him into a hopeless misanthrope. Aged fifteen, he hated the world and himself too. The proverbial chip on his shoulder was almost visible. I once had the opportunity forced upon me to talk to him most frankly. I like to think that his eyes were opened to a few things that he had not been aware of. The world did not owe him a living. To most people he was no different from anyone else. Being lame was not a privilege nor was it what kept people from him. Other people were much worse off than he was; I, for instance.

I like to think that the boy learned a valuable lesson, and it pleased me to realize that not one of his other teachers could have done the job as well as I did. Was he a changed boy in two weeks' time? Of course he wasn't, but I believe he became less bitter, perhaps a bit softened.

Now, I do not advocate that every faculty should have one lame teacher to act as unofficial guidance counselor to the school's misfits and half chicks, although that might

be a good idea, an idea as sound at least as some I have seen put into practice through the years. I do say that if a handicapped person has the training necessary and the character and personality traits that make for good teaching, that person will be as successful and useful on a faculty as those sounder "in wind and limb." It's much like my sister's answer to a friend who had asked her if her crippled brother wasn't teaching school. "Yes, he is, but he ain't crippled in the head."

In viewing my colleagues from the critical angle of the crutch, I worry most about those whose handicaps are not so obvious as mine are. There are too many to be discussed here, but in general they are the people Edna St. Vincent Millay had in mind when she wrote those rich and penetrating lines:

The world stands out on either side  
No wider than the heart is wide;  
Above the world is stretched the sky,  
No higher than the soul is high.

And he whose soul is flat—the sky  
Will cave in on him by and by.

A few years ago Louise Baker wrote a very witty and exceedingly clever autobiography, *Out on a Limb*. It is the life story of a girl who had a leg amputated as the result of an accident. She taught school for a while and worked with a very fine teacher of Latin who was also quite lame. Their teaching seems to have included some very jolly times; mine has, too. But there are a few minor anxieties.

In the fall soon after school starts I look forward to Fire Prevention Week and its attendant fire drills with a pronounced feeling of disenchantment. If the fire alarm rings and I happen to be on the first floor, I go out. If the alarm rings and I am teaching in my room on the second floor, my pupils go out. And a tolerant principal does not check on me too carefully. But if the school ever burns, I'm sure that some

one will hold a net for me, and my departure will be made with a flourish denied to all my able bodied fellow workers.

In regard to weekly assemblies, sometimes I go downstairs to sit with my students, sometimes not, but sitting or marching with them has never even been discussed by my supervisors. In the over-all

school program other things seem to be of more importance, and of course I am glad to find this is so. It all seems to work out.

My purpose has been to suggest mildly that a physically handicapped teacher might possibly be an asset to a faculty. If there is none in your school, is it because none has ever applied?



## “IN MY OPINION . . .”

### *Evening Classes*

#### TO THE EDITOR:

Although Rochester, N.Y., has had classes for the teaching of English to foreigners since 1904, it was not until two evenings ago that I availed myself of an opportunity to visit the evening classes of Rochester's unique School No. 9. It is actually inspiring to observe at first hand the exceptionally fine piece of work that Principal George McNeill and his faculty of 22 are doing here with foreign-born adults, many of whom are but recently arrived in the United States under the terms of the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. No fee of any kind is charged, no report cards or graduating certificates are issued; but the serious dedication to an important goal permeates the entire school and is everywhere apparent.

While there is one class in sewing and two in citizenship, there are 18 classes for the teaching of English as a tool for more effective living in the American environment. Our Board of Education is informed of the arrival in Rochester of each new immigrant and displaced person, who is then invited to make use of the school's opportunities from 7:30 to 9:30 each Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Since July 1, approximately 650 people have registered in these English classes alone.

Each registrant receives an initial interview—sometimes through an interpreter—for the purpose of placement in the proper class. At the present time there are six “Beginners I” classes, six “Beginners II,” two “Advanced Beginner,” two “Intermediate,” and two “Advanced” classes. For the past three years the school has continued right through the summer months, so that with two classes a week even those who knew no English at the start usually complete eighth-grade English work in three years' time.

The program of the various English classes ranges through such work as the dramatization of action verbs; instructions on how to wrap, label, stamp, and insure packages destined for Europe; and practice in writing a business letter that will arrange for a class trip through Rochester's main post office. The textbooks used are written especially for the purpose of teaching English and the ways of American life to adults, and the speed of progress of an individual through the various “grades” depends only upon his own speed of learning. For two years the school had a special class for war brides, and recently the State Education Department has used the school for helping to standardize, and even to write, its literacy tests.

Although the students' educational backgrounds range from relatively little schooling in the old country to graduation from college and many years of experience in the professions, the new D.P.s are generally better educated than were the pre-war immigrants. The variety of accents within a single class, the age range from 16 to over 70, and the obvious appreciation of the students for the help they are receiving are unique characteristics. One man remarked that this past Christmas was the first “Merry Christmas” he had known for ten years. When the twin boys of the 12-child Dutch Blaakman family were asked how they liked America, their spontaneous, enthusiastic grins were memorable to see.

Undoubtedly the citizenship classes, which slumped during the war years, will soon expand as this fresh wave of arrivals masters English as a working tool. And unquestionably School No. 9 is doing a truly great work for and with these new members of the Rochester community.

CARLOS DE ZAFRA, JR.  
John Marshall High School  
Rochester, N.Y.

# EVOLUTION *slighted* in high-school BIOLOGY

By

ESTELLE R. LABA and EUGENE W. GROSS

THE THEORIES of organic evolution and the theory of the gene are of profound significance in the biological sciences. Together they provide the twin pillars upon which rest the entire edifice of zoology, botany, paleontology, and human anatomy and physiology. Conversely, the absence or deletion of these theories from the study of biology would make the detailed observations about living things pointless and fragmentary.

As such, therefore, the concepts of organic evolution and the gene bear the same relation to the biological sciences as the atomic-molecular theory and the laws of the conservation of matter and energy bear toward the physical sciences.

When, furthermore, we recall that Darwin's theory caused a revolution in the collective thinking of the western world and a re-evaluation of ancient faith and cosmogony, the meager, evasive, and equivocal discussion accorded the theory in many current high-school biology texts is a matter of grave concern to all educators.

Nettled by this situation, the writers decided to undertake a systematic but limited survey of teacher attitudes toward, and textbook treatment of, the topic of organic evolution. Accordingly, a questionnaire was drawn up and mailed to all those teaching biology in the high schools of Essex County, N. J., which includes Newark. Teachers were asked to refrain from signing the questionnaires because we wanted honest and objective answers to our questions. Of a total of 64 teachers so reached, 29 or 45%, responded. These 29 teachers taught biology to a total of 2,623 pupils.

The objectives of our survey were these:

- (1) To determine what texts were being used in our area and teacher criticism of the treatment of evolution in those texts.
- (2) To determine to what extent organic evolution is discussed in biology courses.
- (3) To learn what subject matter is included in the discussion of evolution and to compare this with the content called for in a widely used syllabus, that of the city of Newark, N. J.
- (4) To discover the materials used in the teaching of organic evolution.
- (5) To determine any correlation between the treatment accorded the subject and the teachers' own philosophies.

Four of the eight most widely used books were criticized with varying degrees of severity by a number of teachers. Our own analysis of these texts bore out the criticism.

Our study of Curtis, Caldwell, and Sherman, for example, reveals only nine pages devoted to the topic of descent with change. As proof for the occurrence of organic evolution the authors cite the conventional evidences, using only one or two sentences each for such immense fields of study as fossils, coal deposits, embryos, comparative anatomy, and vestigial organs. The term "evolution" is not mentioned, nor does Darwin's name occur in connection with the concept of change.

Interestingly enough, the phylogenetic tree in this text shows no sketch representing man at the pinnacle. Another sketch, portraying comparative embryology, contains no illustration of the human embryo. Left to his own devices, a young student, after studying this text, must conclude that the tissues and organs of human

beings are of a special variety bearing no resemblance to those of the lower animals.

Bayles and Burnett, a text used by four of our respondents, devotes three pages to modern changes in horses, cattle, and dogs. A single paragraph is devoted to Darwin's postulates, and mutation as a cause for change is described. Rather regretfully, the authors conclude that "it seems that they [plants and animals] were not all created at one time and that they have not remained as created." We must protest that although "create" may make for sound doctrinaire theology, it is certainly not biology.

Another book that is criticized for its treatment of evolution is Vance and Miller's text. One teacher remarked that it "seems to avoid the issue as though afraid of criticism." There is, we find, a sound, definite statement that evolution is an established fact. However, reproduction and struggle for survival as the possible mechanics of evolutionary change are not discussed, nor is the environment described as a selective, "screening" agency.

A book recently published and now on the approved Newark listing is by Edwin F. Sanders. The author's treatment of genetics is very weak and his discussion of evolution is almost non-existent. The only unquestioned form of inherited variation is mutation, but there is no discussion of mutations in this text. Evidences for evolution are fragmentary and imperfect. Material on natural selection is wholly inadequate. Furthermore, Sanders implies a special creation for man and a vitalism of structure and function in living things. These and other observations lead the author to mingle theology and science, attempting to reconcile the observations of one with the faith of the other, a dubious undertaking for a writer of science texts.

Of a number of texts with more satisfactory treatment of evolution—Moon and Mann; Moon, Mann, and Otto; Ritchie; and Smith—it was the general consensus

that Smith rates highest. Smith's unit on evolution is well organized, clearly written, and fairly inclusive. Here is a book that displays a greater degree of scientific integrity than most other high-school biologies.

Turning to an evaluation of teacher attitudes toward, and treatment of, the theory of organic evolution, our survey yielded these results.

Of the 29 teachers, 8 did not discuss evolution as a regular area in their biology teaching. These 8 teachers taught 804 students (31% of the total number involved) whose knowledge of the theory of evolution, therefore, will come to them like any other type of informal knowledge—fragmentary, shallow, and distorted. To some extent, 1,561 students, taught by 21 teachers, did discuss evolution.

The number of the class periods devoted to the discussion varied considerably, all the way from 1 to 15 periods. The average length of time devoted to the topic of evolution was about 6 days as compared to the 10 days suggested in the 1944 Newark syllabus.

As to the attitude of the teachers, 9 of our respondents, although believing in the validity of the concept of "descent with change," still hold that organic change is

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

*The authors present the findings of their study concerning the teaching of evolution in the biology classes of northern New Jersey high schools, and state their opinions concerning the shortcomings of both textbooks and classroom teaching on this topic. Many readers, of course, may have different ideas about the matter. Miss Laba teaches science in Central Evening High School, Newark, N. J., and Mr. Gross is a member of the faculty of the Newark Colleges of Rutgers University.*

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the effect of supernatural causes, *i.e.*, a divinely guided process. Twelve maintain the scientific outlook, which is simply the search for a natural cause for a particular natural event.

Twenty-five teachers of the 29 indicate to their classes that evolution occurs at least in part through mutations, and 23 suggest the survival of species through natural selection and chance. Twenty-one teachers try to develop the concept of the Darwinian "struggle for existence." Twenty discuss the evolution of plants as well as animals, and only 18 discuss the evolution of man from an animal origin.

Reports on a number of other questions in the survey are of interest. We asked for a check, for example, on those evidences for evolution presented by the teacher. Surprisingly, only 14, fewer than half, cite geological distribution of organisms as evidence for evolution. This is unexpected since all tests used in this county offer geological evidences even if other important facts are omitted.

As we stated in an earlier paragraph, fewer than two-thirds of our respondents discuss the evolution of man, although the Newark course of study definitely calls for such a discussion. We neglected to include a question regarding some other material in the Newark syllabus—reference to the fact that the present major races of mankind differ only in superficial physical characteristics and that all races seemingly have equal native abilities, mental and physical, when given equal opportunities to develop. We would like to hazard a guess that the overwhelming majority of the teachers do not include this material in their teaching.

Teachers were queried regarding use of charts, movies, fossils, models, mimeographed or printed matter, laboratory work, or demonstrations, etc. Sixteen of the 29 teachers reported use of fossils. Only 4 teachers make use of two available films on evolution released by the New Jersey State

Museum in Trenton, "Lost World" and "Wizard of Svalof."

Only one teacher, we learned, takes his students on field trips; 5 take their students to museums.

There seems to be a dearth of commercial charts relative to evolution. An alert commercial house might remedy the situation with, for example, a set of seven or eight charts showing "Evidences for Organic Evolution."

Our interpretation of the data in the survey, of which only a fragmentary part is presented in this paper, falls into four categories.

1. Although there are still regions in the United States in which the theory of evolution may not be explained and where texts must have all material relative to that subject excluded, New Jersey has never legislated against such teaching. Yet even without legal assault, many textbooks used here are inadequate and evasive in their treatment of organic evolution.

The names "Darwin" and "evolution" are anathema; there seems to be a tacit conspiracy to avoid their use in print. Two or three texts take an unequivocal and scientific attitude toward the subject of organic evolution, basing their observations on evidence revealed by inquiry and experimentation.

More than half of the textbook writers are caught on the triple-pronged horns of a dilemma: (a) their fear of the fancied or real hostility of segments of the population still influenced by the orthodox cosmogony that is deeply ingrained in the cultural heritage of the western world; (b) their subservience, perhaps, to the pressures exerted by publishers anxious to avoid criticism and to make sales; (c) the undoubted respect of the textbook writers for the countervailing spirit of free scientific inquiry which demands a natural explanation for every natural event.

2. Reflecting the attitudes of certain



areas of society, there are many teachers, at least in northern New Jersey, who are perplexed in their thinking on the subject of evolution. There must be many teachers who are unable to bridge the chasm between the indisputable discoveries of research scientists relative to the facts of organic evolution and their own hostile emotions crystallized, perhaps, in early childhood by religious training. The fact that the topic of evolution is avoided in the classroom by many teachers lends weight to our interpretation.

It is appropriate at this time to observe that the consensus of opinion among practicing biological scientists—i.e., college professors, museum curators, and research workers—is that organic evolution, or descent with change, is an established fact, and that all that remains to be demonstrated are the causes of evolution. Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that these causes, whatever they are, have their sources in the supernatural.

3. The teaching of evolution, quite apart from the confusion engendered by emotional conflicts, is unsatisfactory. The subject matter is incomplete, fragmentary, and unsupported, for the most part, by visual aids. We are aware, however, that the charges which we level at the teaching of organic evolution may be directed in part at the entire field of high-school biology, and that the treatment accorded this science suffers by comparison with the content and teaching methods in chemistry and physics.

4. The world-wide influence of Darwin's theory on politics, philosophy, and popular thinking is scarcely mentioned in classrooms and may, in fact, be unknown to the teachers themselves.

The results of our limited survey, as well as our interpretations of the data, serve again to remind us that there remain un-

solved some fundamental and perplexing problems in American public-school education.

Are we teaching our youth to become critical thinkers who will appreciate the methods of independent scientific research or, as practised in the monolithic states, shall we teach, instead, certain areas of generally accepted and inoffensive information—diluted and digested—to the students, who will then accept them as a matter of course? Perhaps while rendering lip service to the first alternative, we are really manipulating the instruments of public education in order to perpetuate existing institutions and to re-enforce popular opinions.

If one of our objectives is to produce a citizenry which is sensitive to the trappings of authoritarianism then we, as educators, must demonstrate its hollowness by our own critical evaluations in the classroom and in the textbook. Anything less than this—any blind worship of dogma, any stubborn refusal to acknowledge fresh or contradictory evidence—must inevitably lead to the type of science that plays the lackey to state or church.

Therefore, it is our contention that when scientific truths are not fearlessly propounded in classroom and textbook the offending writer, editor, publisher, or teacher performs a signal disservice toward science, toward public-school education, and toward the country itself.

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# When the Faculty Is at CROSS PURPOSES

By  
LELAND S. MARCH

ONE OF THE GREATEST stumbling blocks in the way of educational progress today, is the lack of harmony in the thinking of educators themselves. While freedom of thought is vital in the development of new ideas, and in research for better techniques, there are also times and situations in a school building, a city or county school system, when the adoption of a common point of view toward educational problems is more productive of good results than an attitude of rugged individualism among staff members and administrators. There are times when the group is served best by the practice of common attitudes in similar situations.

To illustrate what we may call the Tower of Babel Philosophy in a school, let us look at a few examples taken from actual experience. The names are fictitious, but the incidents were real.

*Number 1:* Miss Black and Miss White had adjoining rooms in the high school. The school had a policy disapproving the chewing of gum in classes. Miss Black enforced it literally, making pupils throw their gum in the basket as they entered her room. When they left for Miss White's room they would load up with chicle as they went through the door. Regardless of your personal opinion on chewing gum in public, you will agree that this situation was bad for both pupil and teacher morale.

*Number 2:* Miss Gray and Miss Brown taught in rooms facing across the corridor. Miss Gray insisted that pupils use school time in her room for school activities. She banned the reading in her room of the

lurid comic books and funnies so fascinating to adolescent youngsters, and supervised study actually took place. So far as possible she followed the best accepted practices of teaching, testing, and marking. The social traits of courtesy, honesty, and all the rest were stressed. School regulations and time schedules were observed carefully.

Across the corridor an entirely different point of view held sway. Miss Brown kept a stack of comics on a table in the back of the room and any pupil who so desired could read them at any time. A few supposedly "slow" pupils who always lagged behind the class were moved to the back of the room beside the "library table" and left to their own devices as long as they were quiet. They read comics all day or ran the errands uptown when the teacher wanted to get her shopping done early, or desired a newspaper to read during "supervised study" periods. Marks were determined subjectively by this genial, good-natured teacher, who was too kindly to hurt anyone's feelings, so the room always was well represented on the school "honor roll."

Because her students sometimes got their work done early, Miss Brown sometimes dismissed them early as a reward. At noon, in spite of a carefully worked out schedule for sending classes to the cafeteria, this jolly soul invariably sent her room on the "first bell" so they were perennially at the head of the line—which made them love her. Incidentally, this habit gave her a ten or fifteen minute longer noon hour than if she had kept her class until its scheduled time.



As for homework, Miss Brown's pupils worked so hard in class time they never needed to take any books home—so she said. When a brother and sister who happened to be in the same grade were placed one in each room there was a lot of questions as to why the previously slower pupil now got higher marks than the supposedly better student, and was now able to spend his free time in school reading the funny books and never bringing a book home. When a thing is right in one classroom and wrong across the corridor, is it any wonder that the public questions whether educators know the score?

*Number 3:* Miss Stone was a young, energetic, well-trained teacher who supposed that instructions to teach her class a physical-education lesson during the morning recess period were meant to be followed, so she taught calisthenics, games, and all the P. E. stunts she had learned in college.

Miss Wood, the elderly, decrepit (but politically powerful) leader of the "Old Guard" on the faculty, would sneer at the energetic Miss Stone from her chair on the school steps and gibe sarcastically as the younger teacher came in after recess, "Showing off out there? If you keep that up the principal will make us *all* do that."

The rest of the O. G. would slip Miss Stone the needle in that nasty nice way some people have, about being smart. "Of course *you* are better educated than *we* are, so you want to let everybody know it." She got other little stabs in the back. Finally, for the sake of peace with her co-workers, Miss Stone joined the rest of the teachers on the doorsteps and taught her P. E. lesson "by remote control." Now she knows that the title of "Physical Education Period" on the schedule was merely for the purpose of meeting the State Law if a State Supervisor happened in the building and looked at the school program.

The friction here was due to the fact that Miss Stone thought the school was or-

ganized for the benefit of the children, while Miss Wood and the Old Guard believed the school was operated to give them easy jobs. Any effort of Miss Stone and her kind of teacher to do a better job than yesterday is pooh-poohed and ridiculed by Miss Wood and her cohorts because it calls for more effort on their part, and shows up how poor a job they have been doing.

*Number 4:* In the author's first school, the Old Guard habitually teamed up on the mischief-makers and deliberately flunked them out during their freshman year. Poor behavior, inattention, or lack of interest were punished by a failing mark in the subject, regardless of achievement. It was a rude shock to one who had swallowed the idealistic teaching of the professors that education was dedicated to the advancement of youth.

Compare this brutal robbing of young people of their right to an education because they were too frisky at times, with the philosophy which holds that the curriculum should be revised and changed to meet the needs of young people.

There exists an Old Guard, even today, who believe in such things as "a policy of ruthless flunking of the unfit" to raise the caliber of the typical student body: "discover those able to do the work of Grades 10,

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

*Is there any place for "rugged individualism" among the faculty members of a school in matters of school policy? Is student morale depressed when pupils must adjust themselves to the conflicting rules in force among their various teachers? Mr. March discusses a number of actual cases of what he calls "the Tower of Babel Philosophy" to show that it just doesn't work. He is director of instruction of the Monroe County Public Schools, Key West, Fla.*

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11 and 12 by careful testing, and terminate the schooling of the rest at the 9th grade." In fact, a surprisingly large number of secondary-school teachers would like to see a weeding out of the student body, rather than a change in the curriculum to fit the needs and abilities of all our young people.

We could continue with many more illustrations of problems which exist because of differences in the philosophy of staff members. However, the worst troubles arise when the principal and his staff hold different points of view. It makes no difference whether the Great Sachem is Chief Iron-Pants-I-Have-Spoken who burns mischief-makers at a figurative stake, or Chief Little-Kiddies-Can-Do-No-Wrong who rules by a pat on the back—too high up and not hard enough—when wrong doers stray from the straight and narrow way. In either case a well-run school is virtually an impossibility if the teachers belong to the opposite lodge from the principal. This statement needs

no illustrations at all to prove the point.

Human nature being what it is, we never will eliminate all the causes of friction in a school, or a school system, but we can try. Instead of trusting to luck that "things will go better than last year," why not do two positive things about the problem of producing an efficient, well-run school? If your staff possesses a "Tower of Babel Philosophy"—the kind where everybody talks a different language from his neighbor, where misunderstandings arise between perfectly fine people, where rugged individualism runs rampant and cooperation is merely a twenty-five-cent word—if this is a picture of your school, why not strike at the root of the evil and destroy the cause by developing a common point of view among your staff members on the basic problems of education? This common point of view, or common philosophy of education, will eliminate many of the ordinary frictions and misunderstandings in the everyday life of the school.



## Students Air Touchy Problems

No controversial topics are barred from the weekly radio program by students of the public-speaking class of Woodrow Wilson High School in Beckley, W. Va. This Youth Forum was started as an experiment over WWNR, Mutual outlet.

After a series of conferences with the program director of this station, the class, under the direction of its instructor, organized the Youth Forum and planned a series of weekly programs where, as the announcer says, "The youth of this city express their opinions." A local store, the Beckley Hardware and Supply Company, agreed to sponsor this thirty-minute program, and at the end of the first year signed for the same program for the next year.

This Youth Forum gives high-school students the chance to express their opinions on important topics of the day. No controversy is barred. Both sides of an issue, however, must be presented fairly. This feature of the program has made it possible to discuss on two different occasions the touchy problem of mine shutdowns, touchy because Beckley is a coal mining center.

The students select their own topics. The audience is invited to suggest topics for discussion. Among the issues discussed this year were: Berlin Blockade, Types of City Government, Are High School Athletics Overemphasized?, Record of the Eightieth Congress, The Presidential Election, European Military Alliance, Federal Aid to Schools, Repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act, Juvenile Delinquency, Democracy in High Schools, John L. Lewis' Memorial Mine Shut Down, North American Alliance, and others. A great deal of research and reading go into the preparation of these discussions because no student wishes to appear on the air uninformed. The writer serves as moderator on the program. His only trouble is keeping the speaking evenly divided among all the participants.

Youth Forum has proved definitely that controversial subjects can be discussed intelligently by high-school students if they are encouraged to do so. The students are already looking forward to a third year on the air.—JOHN W. SAUNDERS in *West Virginia School Journal*.

# How to Give Your Classes a SOCIAL ANALYSIS

By DAVID C. HOLTBY

**T**O USE THEM or not to use them? That is the question!

Sociometric methods and techniques are not new in education; Hartshorne and May did pioneer work in this field twenty years ago, when they developed what they called a "Guess Who" test. The controversy is fresh and vigorous today, however, and there are widespread differences of opinion on the subject among classroom teachers and administrators. Most of the discussions revolve not around the intrinsic merits of sociometric techniques per se, but rather around the uses and misuses made of the techniques, as well as around the interpretation of sociometric test results.

Skillful teachers recognize the need for understanding the social structure of their classes in order to do their best teaching. Stoke states the problem in writing on *The Social Analysis of the Classroom* for the American Council on Education:

Academic learning in school cannot be separated from the social atmosphere in which it takes place. Since children are taught in groups, they are bound to affect each other. Their attitudes toward one another, and their personal feelings of security and belonging have a lot to do with the way they use their minds. . . . Schoolrooms are often divided into spheres of influence. In academic matters the teacher usually wields the balance of power, but in social affairs the trend of events is often determined by the pupils.

One of the most important, and least frequently recognized, points about group relations is that *the social training which children give one another tends to accentuate their personality deviations rather than remove them*. Every teacher has seen cliques formed in the classroom on bases which promised little for the children drawn into

them. Where cliques or friendship pairs are strongly established, still other students inevitably find themselves unchosen. Unless the teacher is able to perceive and do something constructive about such situations, the isolated or unchosen students become maladjusted both academically and socially.

Stoke says, "The child who withdraws from the group is ignored and allowed to continue his withdrawing behavior. The child who is aggressive meets resistance which strengthens his tendency to fight. The leader and the follower seldom have their roles reversed by their fellows, so that much practice makes for increased dominance in the one and submissiveness on the part of the other."

One common error often made by teachers is to confuse social adjustment among children with social adjustment between children and adults. It is perfectly possible for a child to achieve satisfactory relationships with his teachers, and yet fail to make himself acceptable to his peers.

Moreno, in his book, *Who Shall Survive?*, reports that teachers' guesses as to the identity of the two most selected boys or girls in a group agreed only 48 per cent with the ratings of pupils. *In choosing the least selected two, teachers' guesses agreed only 38 per cent with the student ratings!* C. C. Cowell, in *A Suggested Index of Social Adjustment in High School*, reports correlations of only .37 to .58 between teacher and pupil ratings on the social acceptability of high-school pupils to their comrades. These findings indicate that the impressions which pupils make upon teachers do not necessarily reflect the impressions which they make upon one another.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Do you know the real pattern of acceptances and rejections among the students in any of your classrooms? Usually it is below the surface, says Mr. Holtby, and the leaders that the students in a class accept, and the students rejected by their fellows, aren't known to the teacher. He explains some simple sociometric tests that teachers can use with often surprising results to obtain information they need to help many students. Mr. Holtby teaches English in Rosemead, Cal., High School.*

If we recognize the importance of understanding the social structure of our classes, and we know the low reliability of teachers' guesses about what that social structure actually is, the next problem is to find a satisfactory way of perceiving the true social relationships within a class. The sociometric test, designed specifically to describe the social structure of a class to the teacher, may be the answer to that problem.

There are two principal kinds of sociometric tests—the informal, and the formal or comprehensive. A major division of opinion occurs in the professional literature, and among educators, over the question of which is the best type for actual use in a classroom. Probably the correct answer is that the two types cannot be considered satisfactorily on an either/or basis, but must be evaluated with respect to the specific classroom situation in which the teacher is interested. There are times and circumstances under which the informal type of sociometric test is highly desirable; on the other hand, there are occasions—particularly with secondary-school classes—when the comprehensive or formal type can be used to definite advantage.

The informal type of test usually takes

the form of a single question, which the teacher asks the students to answer as a guide to some proposed class activity. Suppose, for example, that a class has been seated in alphabetical order at the beginning of a term to simplify clerical work; later in the semester it seems desirable to break up the formal arrangement by allowing the students to choose their own seats. One way to use a sociometric technique would be to say, "Tomorrow we are going to rearrange the seating in our class. Will you please jot down on a piece of paper, the names of the three or four students you would most like to have around you?"

By tabulating and plotting the choices made, the teacher gains valuable, and frequently surprising, insights into the patterns of attraction and rejection within a class. If this type of test is used, it is extremely important to follow through by actually doing something with the information obtained. In other words, having asked a class to choose the students they wish to sit by, the teacher should then show the students that their choices are important by rearranging the seating on that basis.

The other principal type of sociometric test is the formal or comprehensive type. This type consists of a series of questions or "guess who" items which identify members of a given class. Negative and positive characteristics are balanced in the test, and important or "key" items are usually screened by less important ones. The students are asked to consider each item thoughtfully, and to write down the names of the students who seem to be described. Students may guarantee the anonymity of their answers by omitting their own names from the papers, and they should be told that no one except the teacher will ever see their answers. The results of such a test can be tabulated and selected items or characteristics plotted on a chart, which is called a sociogram.

To a person looking at a sociogram for

the first time, the whole thing may seem to be a meaningless jumble of circles and lines. The first problem, then, is to trace the pattern and see its significance. It will be easier to see the relationships if only one important positive characteristic and its negative opposite are plotted. Girls may be represented by circles of one color, and boys by circles of another color; the negative characteristic may be plotted as a broken line, and the positive characteristic as a solid one. In the case of both lines, an arrow on one end points to the recipient or object of the opinion, and the other end of the same line is the person who expressed the reaction.

The graphic portrayal of relationships obtained by making a sociogram is frequently a source of eye-opening surprises to the teacher. Certain students will stand out as the natural leaders of the group, others will be actively rejected, and still others may be isolated by indifference. With this information in his possession, the teacher is prepared to do something about the special problems which have been found to exist. In addition to bringing cases of individual maladjustment to light, the sociogram often reveals group attitudes or ideals that need changing or influencing.

It is important to say that the sociogram lays bare only the structure of interrelation, *but not the reasons why the structure is what it is*. The sociogram shows, for example, which children are isolated or unchosen, but it cannot say *why*. It presents an interesting, and often previously unsuspected, picture of social structure, but it does not get at motives or values. The teacher needs to recognize that the results obtained by giving a sociometric test of

either the formal or informal type represent only the point of departure, the signpost which points the way to the next step.

The chief value of a sociometric test is that it describes the social structure of a class to the teacher of that class; the value of making a sociogram resides in the fact that it reveals, graphically, certain patterns of attraction and rejection which could not be discerned so readily in any other way. The information obtained constitutes a valid basis for individual counseling.

In conclusion, it should be stated that sociometric techniques, the sociometric test, and the sociogram have limitations as well as advantages. They *are* capable of misuse, but so are textbooks and courses of study! Merely to say that an instrument is capable of misuse does not condemn the instrument. Such a statement argues, rather, for careful preparation on the part of the teacher and for the use of good sense and critical thinking in interpreting and using test results. One of the implications of calling teaching a profession is that teachers are capable of using this type of instrument, and the information resulting from its use, in a professional manner.

Helen Hall Jennings says, in *Sociometry in Group Relations*, "Group life needs to be studied for ways in which cleavages can be eliminated, or skills developed for handling these cleavages so as to avoid their tremendous psychological waste. Perhaps this can best be achieved by allowing a cosmopolitan population to accept its own diversity and thus train itself for meeting differences." We can implement such a program in our own classrooms by using the sociometric methods and techniques now at our disposal.

As the [school] board hires a law counselor, so it should hire a public-relations consultant. In a school budget of a million, it would not be unreasonable to set aside \$10,000 for the salaries of an expert, a secretary, and miscellaneous expenses. Both the Federal and the state departments of government have such positions on their payrolls: why not the local board?—KARL B. ROSS in *New Jersey Educational Review*.



# WHAT WE

*A faculty's case study  
rehabilitates a pupil*

# LEARNED from TOM

By  
WILLIAM D. CARLSON

EMERSON HAS SAID "The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil." We might go further by saying a teacher must first "learn" the student before he can "teach" him. For in learning about the student we can respect him as an individual, and fulfill the obligation to assist him in attaining the educational, social, and personal adjustment he so deserves.

Let's consider the story of Tom. Here is an example of how the staff learned about a student, respected his problem, and achieved a measure of success in helping him. One digression seems essential before going on to Tom. An assumption made in our school is that whatever is done about finding Tom's problems, the solution and the assistance given to him must *not* be removed from the hands of the classroom teachers and placed in the hands of a specialist alone. Any points illustrated in the story of Tom are things that are of concern to any teacher, counselor, principal, superintendent—anyone in education. We all have the same responsibility—to learn and respect the individual pupil and assist him.

A physical description of Tom during the second semester of his junior year in high school is not much different from a description of Tom today. At that time he was sixteen years of age, small for his age and grade level. One immediately noticed his immature looks, slight build, pale and sallow complexion. A pair of ears readily revealed why some of the boys call him "Loving Cup Handles" or "Wings." He gave the appearance of being tired, listless, and very weak. He had a pleasant smile

which he used infrequently—and most astonishing, a bass voice out of harmony with his size and appearance. In general Tom is the kind of boy who is found on the fringe of the class or group.

Let's begin at the point where Tom's teachers volunteered the information that his scholastic achievement was far from satisfactory. In fact, we found that his standing at the time, other than a "very satisfactory" in physical education, consisted of C in physics, D in algebra, and two incompletes in English and history, with the probability of failures in these two subjects.

You could make one of two assumptions at this point: Tom was not capable of doing better work; or, Tom was not working up to ability, and needed help.

To arrive at a working hypothesis it is possible to investigate at least four areas: (1) What is the past record of achievement? (2) What do the teachers have to say about the trend of his work? (3) What information is available concerning achievement testing? (4) What is his tested level of scholastic ability?

From Tom's permanent record card we found that the previous year when he was in the tenth grade, he had "Excellent" in physical education, a C plus, a C and a C minus. In the ninth grade he made A, B, and three C's. It would appear that Tom has been sliding downhill. Teachers indicated that since the beginning of the year his participation and output have been consistently dropping. Tests of educational development or achievement given at the beginning of the year show that Tom

ranked in the upper one-fourth of his class in all areas. On the basis of three intelligence tests Tom would place in the superior group with an I.Q. in the vicinity of 133. Lack of ability could not be the reason for his drop in performance—so our assumption had to be that Tom was not achieving in accordance with expectations.

What caused Tom to under-achieve? Poor work habits? Weakness in basic skills? Poor health?

Checking the record of his health examination, we found that he had been born prematurely and was sickly as a child. He wore glasses at one time but no longer wears them. In junior high school Tom was placed in what was called the "Lowered Vitality Group" requiring special rest periods and other attention. In the ninth grade he missed four weeks of school as a result of scarlet fever. He had had sinus trouble, very frequent colds, and, early in the tenth grade, a light case of pneumonia. A heart murmur was pointed out by physical examinations, but no serious heart condition. Tom stated in a questionnaire that he felt his health was not too good, that he tired easily and could not participate in active sports. There was no indication of stuttering or stammering.

Did the health record contain our clue? He had been sickly for the past few years and low in vitality. He had missed much school. Was this why his grades had been going down?

Poor health was doubtless a factor. But we knew that difficulties were not caused by a single factor, but rather that "multiple causation" operated. What about his basic skills and work habits—why did he have two incompletes? Back to the records again. He had entered kindergarten at the age of four and remained there for two years. Progress in the elementary school seemed to be better than average as far as grades can indicate. He skipped the fifth grade and shortly after this time his reports began to

decline; this was continued in senior high school. Perhaps the acceleration was inadvisable, leaving him shaky in certain skills which year by year accumulated to reach the present point scholastically.

However, his consistent high ability in achievement tests with no weaknesses in diagnostic tests failed to substantiate this possibility. Again the teachers could supply needed information. Written reports from last year indicated that Tom was slow in handing in his work. This year there was unanimity that Tom lacked promptness, failed to hand in work, had poor attention in class and participated very little.

Poor study habits might be the basis for his low grades, but they did not offer the answer to the question, "Why the poor habits?"

Since there was evidence of poor work habits, Tom was called in for a conference. He talked easily and fluently, had an excellent vocabulary, seemed to be well read. He had no hesitancy in discussing his low grades and in fact was eager to talk about them. He stated that he would welcome aid in improving his grades. Tom readily admitted to poor study habits and told of frequently becoming disgusted with his work after a short time and turning to his model airplanes. Even here he found it difficult to concentrate long enough to com-

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

*"This story," writes Mr. Carlson, "is based upon an actual case from our files and should be of interest to all connected with secondary education—teachers and principals as well as counselors. It is intended to be a practical demonstration of what a school staff can do to assist a student with problems." He is director of student personnel at University High School, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.*

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plete them. He frequently turned on the radio and abandoned his lessons. Tom said that he couldn't keep his mind on his work and was bored by it. He disliked English and history (the classes in which he was failing) but liked physical education.

Thus far we found that Tom had low achievement, high ability. Basic skills good, study habits poor. Health had been below par. Did the health factor influence his ability to concentrate and thereby bring about his present difficulty?

Succeeding conferences with Tom brought out one interesting feature—constant changing of vocational interests. While we expect young people to change occupational goals during high school, Tom's vacillation was almost pathological in that from day to day he presented such a rapidly changing picture. For instance, in the course of several days he ran the gamut from mechanics through cartography, geology, science, lithography, railroading, and highway construction, to mining. Such mental gymnastics are quite an exaggeration of an average high-school boy's fluctuations.

He further brought out that he liked sports very much, did his best work in physical education, but never went out for sports. As he put it, "I'm just not any good."

We found that Tom spent about twenty-five hours a week at home reading rather heavy novels such as *War and Peace* and *Tom Jones*. He expressed disinterest in college if he had to take what he called "general courses" or "useless courses." To cite an example as to why such courses left him "cold," he explained that he could not see any sense in going on to study the background of the diplomatic relations leading up to the purchase of the Panama Canal. "That's foolish since I'm not going out to dicker for the canal—they already have it," he explained. His statements were very well thought out and logical in themselves, but almost "too logical." In general he seemed

to be uninterested in going to college.

As to his social relationships we found from Tom and his teachers that he had only one friend in school. This boy lived in the opposite part of the city so their contacts were limited to school. There were no companions of his age in the neighborhood. He had been a member of a church social group but dropped it suddenly during the winter without offering a reason. He had no girl friend but talked to a girl who sat next to him in one of his classes. He had a sister five years old. He had to take care of this sister when he returned from school, since his mother worked. Tom also did a lot of work at home, such as painting, taking care of the lawn, and household chores.

Perhaps one of the striking bits of information was Tom's studious avoidance of any reference to his father. When led around to this area he would make a sudden shift. When we were finally able to have any conversation about his dad he spoke quite resentfully and intimated that his father was thwarting him in selecting his life work since he would not help Tom go to college.

The picture of Tom was beginning to show aspects other than ability, work habits, health. It now included practically non-existent social relationships, confused goals and purposes, and some aspects of the home or family that were not quite in focus.

In order further to clarify the situation we decided to call Tom's mother in for a conference. From her we verified the health situation, his lack of application to studies at home, the void with respect to social contacts with people of his own age. In addition she expressed her concern that he had taken to thumb sucking. He realized that he should not be doing such a thing, tried to do it only when he thought he was not observed, and even purchased medicines to break the habit.

At this point one could begin to piece together a pathetic mental pattern of complete confusion on studies and vocational goals, a lone-wolf attitude, a regression to thumb sucking. Did this require the assistance of a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist? Additional information from his mother led us along a different path.

Both parents were college graduates—the father a construction engineer. The home was located in a better than average section of the city. When Tom was eleven years old, five years before, his sister was born. Several weeks later the father entered the armed services and was away from the family for a period of four years. During this time, for reasons known only to themselves, father and mother drifted apart, and this was known to Tom through correspondence with his dad. At the conclusion of his war service the father did not return to the home but established himself in another city. He visited the children infrequently. He had told Tom that he thought it foolish for him to go to college, and that he could not support two homes and Tom in college at the same time. Seemingly there was no possibility of reconciliation.

It should now be apparent that we were unable to understand any single kind of information about Tom when it was not in context with other items. The knowledge of under-achievement alone was quite meaningless. Study habits began to take on some meaning when we knew something of his health and home background. His restlessness in actions and thought was illuminated by the insecure home situation. In other words we could not section off a part of Tom and arrive at any logical conclusion.

At this time let us review the sources of information that were utilized: first, of course, there was the observation of the teachers, who form the basis of any guidance program. Next were the recorded data,

cumulative file, questionnaires filled out by the student, anecdotal records written by the instructors. We reviewed test data, both ability and achievement. There were conferences and interviews with the student, his mother and teachers. We referred to medical and physical examinations and reports. Of importance was the checking of the longitudinal record of grades and past school history. These are but a few of the informational areas that should be fitted together to bring about a clearer picture of the individual.

Since the problem originated in the classroom—the school problem, that is—and since the teachers are directly concerned, information should be shared with them or it serves no useful purpose. In a clinical setting, a neat case report would be worked up and submitted to each member concerned, but this is not practical in a school situation. The simplest means available would be to use the conference method. Meeting Tom's instructors in a group made it possible to present an outline of the case. Conference notes had been written and placed in the student's file. The teachers had access to this information for further reading. We raised questions and attempted answers, and suggestions were made as to how we could best assist Tom.

What could we do? What should be done? Could we actually do anything? First of all we needed a basis for understanding Tom's problem before we could proceed. Thus far we had collected information and established working hypotheses. Using that information was necessary. In what direction could we act?

That he was under-achieving, that he had poor work habits, had no meaning unless we found out *why* this was so. The *why* of the problem, we felt, could actually be broken into two components: first, the emotional side; and second, the need for status.

Primarily Tom's problem was one of

emotional disturbance. The separation of the parents and his inability to adjust to the loss of his father or refusal to face that fact realistically was the driving force. The birth of his sister when he was eleven years old might have meant a threat to his central position in the family. The father entering the service just a few weeks later, and then actual marital separation, coincided with the drop in his school work at the junior-high level. With the return of the father and establishment of a separate home, Tom's grades declined further. About the time the father expressed inability or unwillingness to send Tom to college, thumb sucking appeared—an infantile form of satisfaction substitute. Knowing this habit to be inconsistent with his age, Tom's failure to break it reinforced the emotional disturbance.

His daily change of vocational choice, the expression of disinterest in college and resentful statements regarding his father are all expressions of the emotional upset and uncertainty of the future. His inability to concentrate on his studies, his desire to be alone, are manifestations or symptoms, *not causes* of the problem. No wonder Tom could not concentrate, could not get interested in school; no wonder Tom couldn't make up his mind as to life work and chances for college.

The second cause for his difficulties we felt to be his need for status among his peers. All of us need recognition and a place. He had not achieved scholastically. His size and physical condition prevented him from being in sports although he was intensely interested in athletics. His best grades came in physical education where he attempted to measure up to the athletic dreams he had. His acute awareness of his inabilities no doubt contributed to his emotional disturbances.

In no way did he secure recognition from his group. While he was not rejected, he was not accepted. He was ignored. He re-

mained alone, withdrew from the group, and spent an unproportionate amount of time at home reading voraciously, no doubt trying to secure vicariously the deeds and feelings that he could not secure in real life. Again we have a reinforcement of his emotional reactions and further withdrawal.

Well, what could we do? Should we try to effect a reconciliation of the parents, since this seemed to be at the root of his trouble? That would hardly be within our province and could not be considered. Should we urge him to try out for an athletic squad? But to do so probably would result in another failure. Should we give him more makeup work to bring up his grades? But he couldn't complete the usual assignments, and this would be but further failure for him. Tom needed some success, some measure of security in his life.

Since the "stated problem," that is, low grades, had to be acted upon immediately, we started out as follows. First, Tom worked out with us a day-to-day schedule, setting deadlines for turning in work not completed. In this way it appeared to be less of a herculean task and more one his size. Second, we drew up a schedule for home study and secured the cooperation of his mother in running the schedule. Third, the instructors met with him at stated intervals to assist him, give additional work and explanations. We had to check on him and continue to urge him gently until he got into the swing of things and felt that some of the weight of his work was being lifted.

The problem of status was attacked next, and two suggestions were made. The English instructor, to help him in composition and give him a position of recognition, suggested he write sport stories for the high-school paper. This would lend him an air of being connected with sports, give him recognition. The coach probably made the greatest contribution. Track season was coming up and a student manager was

needed. He said that he could tip off enough of his squad so that Tom would be elected manager. While a manager actually only handles equipment and the water bottle, he would be a member of an athletic squad, make all the trips, and in general, "be on the inside."

But we still had the bull by the tail as far as the emotional problem was concerned—that of the family relationship and Tom's uncertainty as to the future. We didn't dare hang on, and we didn't dare let loose. No one on the staff had ever talked to the father. It would be a ticklish proposition at best. An appropriately vague letter was directed to the father stating that Tom's school work had not been too good, and that concern over his plans was seriously interfering with his work. Would he care to arrange an appointment so that we might discuss Tom's situation and try to make his senior year a good one? For some time we had no answer, but just after the close of school in the spring the father called for an appointment.

Without reference to the home situation I was frank in stating that Tom had good ability, had been doing poorly, was definitely up in the air as to what he might expect to do after graduation. This uncertainty was affecting his school work and his peace of mind. The father was asked what suggestions he might make since we were all interested in doing the best for Tom. The father said that if Tom were college material he would do what he could to assist him. Since this was the "aching corn" in Tom's mind, it was suggested that the father get together with Tom, make some plans, and relieve his mind on that score. To this he agreed.

How did it turn out? I wish that in the good story-book fashion I might say that overnight Tom got straight A's in his school work, became a leader of his class, and never had another worry. But that isn't so, and it wasn't expected. Scholastically,

we were quite well satisfied for that year, since it was too late to make any great improvements. He did pass all courses with one D and the rest low C's. He entered into the managership of the track team with great vigor, did his work well.

During his senior year, Tom was manager of the athletic team and it was remarkable how this helped his ego and contributed to his concept of himself. He began to show some self assurance, to demonstrate initiative in carrying out his duties that a year before would not have been expected. Scholastically he completed his senior year with an A, two B's, and two C's. He made this statement one day: "You know, I find English and social studies much more interesting this year than last year." Yes, Tom found them more interesting since he could now put his mind on the subjects, whereas before, his mind was occupied with his personal problems.

Tom's father met with him and together they made an estimate of the college expenses to be expected. The father agreed to underwrite this amount. The very fact that Tom could participate in the actual planning did more to ease his mind about the future than the mere knowledge that help would be available.

Well, Tom was graduated, and both he and his mother were as happy as could be. Tom applied and was accepted for entrance into the University. That fall I met his mother on the campus. She said that Tom enjoyed college, had a part-time job down town, and seemed happy. This isn't enough, however, for as a school we shall be interested in a follow-up to determine how he is doing in college and after he leaves. But that, I suppose, is another story.

What did we, as a staff, learn from working with Tom? Briefly let me summarize: (1) We must learn the student before we can teach him or deal with his problems. (2) While problems of students vary, we find that causes are not merely

simple single factors, but have many roots and ramifications. (3) Dealing with problems of students requires the concerted efforts of all members of the school staff. (4) A systematic search should be made for available information in the various areas of the student's life—home, family, social, ability, achievement, emotional, health. (5) Utilize all possible sources of information—the teachers, records, tests, medical

data, written reports, the student, parents, friends. (6) Give back to the people concerned—the teachers—information that will be helpful to them, by notes and individual and group conferences. (7) Look for underlying causes. (8) Plan assistance on the basis of what the school can do to meet the student's needs. (9) Give something to the student that is tangible, not a mere pat on the back and best wishes.

## \* \* TRICKS of the TRADE \* \*

By TED GORDON

**IDEAS FOR ASSOCIATION**—A record of each pupil's birthday is kept. On a chart, next to the pupil's name, is placed the name of someone who has enriched our lives, whose birthday is on the same day. Each student, when his birthday appears, is expected to give an oral report and answer questions concerning the famed person who shares his birthdate.—*Thomas E. Robinson, Supt. of Schools, Trenton, N.J.*

**NEW TEACHERS**—It should be an annual custom in this column to suggest that new teachers learn the National Education

Association Code of Ethics. Is it in your teachers' handbook, Mr. School Superintendent?

**BLIND SPOTS**—Make it a habit to survey your classrooms at least once a week with the eyes of a stranger. Ask yourself: How long has that poster been on the wall? When was that bulletin board exhibit put up? Displays of materials which no longer have meaning in solving immediate problems being studied cause students to become habitually unobservant.—*Dr. Thelma Thorne, State College of Washington, Pullman, Wash.*

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Readers are invited to submit aids and devices which may be of help to others. Please try to limit contributions to 50 words or fewer—the briefer the better. Original ideas are preferred; if an item is not original, be sure to give your source. This publication reserves all rights to material submitted, and no items will be returned. Address contributions to THE CLEARING HOUSE. Dr. Gordon teaches in East Los Angeles Junior College, Los Angeles, Cal.*

**WALL PROTECTION**—A tiny cork tacked to the lower back edge of a picture frame will prevent the frame from marking the wall.—*Western Family Magazine.*

**GYM JAM**—Pingpong balls and paddles kept in a wire basket in the equipment room of the gymnasium make them more accessible and keep the lively balls from bouncing into remote corners.—*Geraldine Schwaderer, John Muir Jr. High School, Los Angeles, Calif.*



# Our Junior High TESTING PROGRAM

*Garner the good,  
avoid the dangers*

By  
EILEEN IBERG

THE JUNIOR high schools receive the pupils' folders from the feeder elementary schools with a wealth of standardized test results. In these folders are two mental maturity tests (fortunately, we seldom call them intelligence quotients or I.Q.'s anymore), four reading tests, and four arithmetic tests which we use to check each pupil's progress through the elementary school.

After the children have been with us for several months, we give them a personality test. These tests are admittedly weak in validity. But a wealth of information can be gleaned from them if they are used properly. The scores on these tests, if used as other scores, are dangerous—they are never used by a good counselor for individual counseling. The responses to the 144 test questions are studied for patterns of personality. These responses, when compared with the behavior symptoms, often lead directly to problems that otherwise might take a long time of dangerous trial-and-error fumbling to discover, or go entirely undiscovered. It is a pity that this valuable tool is so severely criticized and so seldom used just because so few of us get the necessary training to use it properly.

Washington Junior High School plans to retest personality in the ninth grade. An intensive study and comparison of patterns in the seventh and then the ninth grade should not only help us to understand individual needs better, but eventually give us new light on early adolescent personality and adolescent problems.

Each pupil's reading and arithmetic

progress is checked twice during his junior-high course.

The noting and checking of the progress is just as important as the score in individual guidance. If there is steady progress, regardless of speed of progress, all would seem to be as desired. However, if there is a sudden leveling off, or drop in the progress, there should be an immediate investigation.

The scores are very helpful to the subject teachers, for they won't expect a child coming into their room with, for instance, a fifth-grade arithmetic score to be ready to do eighth-grade math.

A new mental maturity score is obtained in the eighth grade. If there is much difference between a pupil's three scores, an individual Stanford-Binet (or Wechsler-Bellvue for junior high) should be given to get a valid score. Our school system sorely needs more people trained in administering these individual tests. Every school could well use a person so trained. And any teacher can learn to administer one of these instruments in a summer or an evening course.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Miss Iberg offers the plan of Washington Junior High School, Rock Island, Ill., as an "ideal testing program" with a good testing philosophy behind it. But she also points out some dangers that must be avoided even in a good testing plan. She is the counselor in the school.*

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During the eighth grade a series of aptitude and interest tests is administered. The algebra aptitude test is given and it does a fairly good job of predicting a child's readiness to take a subject as abstract as algebra. Parents should ask for this score, and would be wise to advise their child to wait at least until the tenth grade before trying algebra if his score is around or below the 50th percentile—or not to take it at all if it is much lower than that.

Another interesting aptitude test is the mechanical test. It is one of the tests that a child should be given before making up his mind to take a subject like manual arts in high school. A foolish policy in our system is the giving of these only to the boys. Many of our girls are mechanically inclined, and many jobs now held by women require a mechanical aptitude. Many of our girls need to know whether they are mechanically inclined as well as our boys.

A clerical aptitude test is sometimes administered, but this test is more useful in senior high. In the event that one of the older pupils in junior high quits school to get a job, the counselor might use this test to help him decide upon the type of work for which to apply. Otherwise, it is used as one factor in helping students to decide whether to take a commercial curriculum. The main danger is that this test might carry too much weight in a child's mind either one way or another when he chooses his high-school subjects.

An interest inventory is also administered during the eighth year. This is the hardest

inventory for a counselor to interpret to the students. Pupils *will insist* that if an interest inventory shows a high score in a certain area, they would be good in that field and therefore should take courses leading to occupations in the field. It means *nothing* of the kind. It simply means that the pupil is interested in work in that certain field *at the time he took the inventory*. If an interest inventory taken a year or two later still shows high interest in the same field, then it is significant. Sustained interest at this age is noteworthy. We all do a better job, aptitude or no, in work in which we have a great interest.

Rock Island has an ideal testing program, and our administrators are to be complimented upon the time and expense they are willing to allot to a wonderful tool. But it is only a tool—and a scientific tool that must be used carefully. Therefore, the dangers of such a testing program are well worth heeding. First, no test has been devised, or probably ever will be devised, that alone can help us to understand the most important part of a child—his feeling and emotions, his longings and fears, his loves and hates, his motivations and frustrations. If we ever permit a testing program to take the place of understanding, loving, trusting, and comforting exchange of confidences either in the school—or, Heaven forbid, in the homes—may the good Lord help our children!

Also—tests merely help us to discover strengths and weaknesses, abilities and needs. If we don't act upon the information after we have it, why test?



### *Retired Teachers Have Fun*

Indeed, retired teachers do not mope. What fun doing the things we never had time for while teaching! My hobbies are winter travel, public speaking, studying Spanish, writing, doing a news-

paper column. Note that they are all educational. After 41½ years a teacher, nothing else satisfies.—NINABELLE HURST NICHOLS in *Los Angeles School Journal*.



# COMIC STRIPS:

## How Well Can Our Pupils Read Them?

By CLAUDE MITCHELL

IN THESE DAYS of television, movies, and radio, together with a saturation of comic books and comic strips, when it seems that we are witnessing a marked decline in attention; when there are attempts to make the process of education painless and the lessons therein more sugar-coated; and when teaching by comics and comic strips is advocated by some of our so-called experts, it would seem to be about time that we show some interest not only in whence we came but also whither we are headed.

Beyond a doubt, preparation for living in an atomic age, with all its advantages and disadvantages, necessitates more training and more knowledge and intellectual alertness than was required for the agrarian culture that is passing from us.

The increased sale of comic books and the elaborate display of the almost innumerable kinds and varieties on our newsstands indicate the changed type of recreational reading of our day and age. The facts given in terms of the weekly sale impress one with the preponderance of comic books sold to American youth.

It is only natural then that some questions should arise concerning this change and the effect of such recreational reading upon the reading ability and habits of our youth. In general, it almost seems that a bold attempt is being made to attract attention without engaging it, to entertain rather than enrich, and to present material which can be read easily and forgotten even more quickly.

Among others, the questions that have from time to time presented themselves to teachers are the following:

1. Do the young actually read the comics understandingly or are the pictures themselves the chief attractions?

2. What effect will this half-picture, half-word reading have upon their actual thought-getting-from-the-printed-page reading?

Many and heated have been the discussions along this line and perhaps more heat than light has been generated. To the writer these questions have become so vital and interesting that he conducted an experiment to get the answers. The experiment was prompted when upon a special occasion a teacher remarked that pupils could not read intelligently. Another teacher who happened to hear the remark replied, "Oh, you should give them the comics, that is what they read." This remark immediately raised the question: Can they read the comics intelligently? This experiment is an attempt to answer that question.

It was assumed from the outset that many of the junior-senior high-school pupils were readers of the Sunday-paper comic strips. With this assumption as a basis, two Sunday editions of the two metropolitan newspapers of our section, the *Pittsburgh Press* and the *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, were carefully studied for comic-strip vocabulary difficulties. The following strips were used in the experiment: *Abbie an' Slat*, *Blondie*, *Captain Easy*, *Ella Cinders*, *Freckles and His Friends*, *Flash Gordon*, *Jane Arden*, *Joe Jinks*, *Kerry Drake*, *Mary Worth*, *Mickey Finn*, *Mitzi McCoy*, *Nancy*, *Off the Record*, *Out Our Way*, *Our Boarding House*, *The Orbits*, *Rex Morgan, M.D.*, *Rusty Riley*, *Red Ryder*, *Steve Roper*, *Tillie the Toiler*, *They'll Do It Every*

Time, and Willie Dee.

From these a vocabulary list of 44 words was selected. Twenty-four of these were used in context material in Part I of the test and 20 were used as a test for vocabulary-definition matching in Part II. The pupils were not informed that these words were taken from the comic strips until after the completion of the test. A copy of the test as administered follows:

#### READING AND VOCABULARY TEST

##### Part I

Use the words below the following sentences to simplify the meaning of the italicised words. Do so by writing under each italicised word the number of the simple word that best explains the italicised word in the sentences. Write the number in the parentheses below the word.

The athletic torso of the *rajah* was given a very ( ) ( ) humiliating massage. According to a hallowed ( ) ( ) tradition that has become *obsolete*, it was to cure ( ) ( ) his persistent harping and *infernal* slothfulness. In ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) the smuggled merchandise, the buffet assigned to ( ) ( ) ( ) ( ) the hideous dormitory was detected. It was not ( ) ( ) ( )

##### EDITOR'S NOTE

*Often it has been said that the very secondary-school pupils who "can't read" their schoolbooks become surprisingly adept readers when they turn to the sports pages and comic strips. Now Dr. Mitchell rises to question the pupils' ability to read even the balloons of the comic strips. Using 44 words taken from comic strips in local newspapers, he gave a comprehension test to the pupils in West Newton, Pa., Junior-Senior High School. He has some unhappy questions to ask about the result of the test. Dr. Mitchell is superintendent of schools in West Newton.*

complimentary in the least but *vice versa* and ( ) ( ) pointed to *larceny*. Then in *falsetto* tones the transmitter sent forth an *emergency* call for the jilted ( ) ( ) companion. ( ) ( )

- |                |                 |                |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. allotted    | 11. alone       | 21. queen      |
| 2. body        | 12. clever      | 22. rubbing    |
| 3. building    | 13. illegal     | 23. rejected   |
| 4. behalf      | 14. immediate   | 24. sacred     |
| 5. commodities | 15. industrious | 25. shrill     |
| 6. devilish    | 16. lasting     | 26. side-board |
| 7. discovered  | 17. laziness    | 27. spotted    |
| 8. discarded   | 18. offending   | 28. theft      |
| 9. dreadful    | 19. opposite    | 29. utterances |
| 10. favoring   | 20. prince      |                |

##### Part II

Match the words in Column A with the definitions in Column B.

- | A            | B  |
|--------------|--|
| —Amputated   | 1. Like a general                        |
| —Escutcheon  | 2. In the future                         |
| —Efficiency  | 3. To remove                             |
| —Cringing    | 4. To set or lay down                    |
| —Crusade     | 5. To baffle or defeat                   |
| —Convictions | 6. To crinkle or twist                   |
| —Frustrated  | 7. To scutch or remove                   |
| —Furtively   | 8. Fertile                               |
| —Generous    | 9. To unite                              |
| —Documentary | 10. Obstruct or hinder                   |
| —Interrupt   | 11. A body of learning                   |
| —Lore        | 12. To extend in different directions    |
| —Morale      | 13. Evident or plain                     |
| —Prescribe   | 14. Pay back or return                   |
| —Prolific    | 15. State of mind, courage               |
| —Obvious     | 16. Stingy or selfish                    |
| —Reimburse   | 17. Morally right                        |
|              | 18. Unnatural, uncanny                   |
|              | 19. Abundant or bountiful                |
|              | 20. A shield-like plate                  |
|              | 21. A piece of printed or written matter |
|              | 22. What one firmly believes             |
|              | 23. A movement undertaken                |
|              | 24. Acting competently and effectively   |
|              | 25. Crouching                            |
|              | 26. Slyly or secretly                    |
|              | 27. To strike with sudden force          |
|              | 28. For a time only                      |
|              | 29. Sentimental, visionary               |
|              | 30. To bow in cowardice                  |

TABLE I  
COMPARATIVE POPULARITY OF 24 COMIC STRIPS AMONG 375 JUNIOR- AND SENIOR-  
HIGH-SCHOOL PUPILS AND PER CENTS WHO READ EACH STRIP

Comic Strips	Senior High School		Junior High School	
	Ranking of Strip	% of Readers	Ranking of Strip	% of Readers
1. Abbie an' Slat.	11	48	22	30
2. Blondie.	2	70	2	92
3. Captain Easy.	15	42	14	44
4. Ella Cinders.	5	60	9	52
5. Freckles and His Friends.	10	50	4	60
6. Flash Gordon.	23	25	15	44
7. Jane Arden.	19	38	21	38
8. Joe Jinks.	9	50	7	54
9. Kerry Drake.	12	45	17	42
10. Mary Worth.	13	45	16	42
11. Mickey Finn.	14	42	19	40
12. Mitzi McCoy.	6	55	10	50
13. Nancy.	1	95	1	99
14. Off the Record.	18	40	3	64
15. Out Our Way.	8	52	3	64
16. Our Boarding House.	20	28	24	24
17. The Orbits.	16	43	8	52
18. Rex Morgan, M.D.	7	55	13	48
19. Rusty Riley.	24	15	20	38
20. Red Ryder.	21	28	18	42
21. Steve Roper.	4	60	11	50
22. Tillie the Toiler.	17	40	12	48
23. They'll Do It Every Time.	3	63	6	56
24. Willie Dee.	22	27	5	60

—Romantic

—Temporary

—Weird

Upon the back of the test the pupils checked the comic strips in which they were most interested and which they were in the habit of reading. Table I shows the per cents of the groups that generally read each of the several comic strips.

Table II shows the median scores for junior-senior high-school pupils on the test, Grades VII through XII.

The vocabulary words used in the test were checked with the Thorndike Word List, and it was found that twelve, or 27%, were in the first five thousand of the list, and twenty-nine appeared in the ten thousand list. This means that seventeen, or 39%, were in the second five thousand. Fifteen of the words, or 34%, did not appear in the Thorndike list.

It was somewhat of a surprise, however,

that when these words were arranged in order of difficulty as indicated by the pupil responses, it was found that of the fifteen words not found in the word list, five were in the quartile of the list considered as the easiest by the pupil responses, three were in the second easiest quartile, one in the third, and six were in the quartile considered most difficult.

Since the median score for the whole group of about 375 pupils was 22.5, or 51%

TABLE II  
TEST SCORES OF 375 PUPILS BY GRADES

Grade	Median Score	Range in Scores
VII.....	5.4	1 to 23
VIII.....	6.6	0 to 32
IX.....	15.5	2 to 37
X.....	22	5 to 36
XI.....	29	2 to 42
XII.....	29	6 to 30

(Note: The scores represent the number of correct responses on the 44 words in the test. A score of 44 would be 100%.)

of the possible score, with a range from 12% to 66%, an average reading comprehension as measured by word meanings of only 51%, it would seem that comic strips are not read by secondary-school students with a very high degree of efficiency as far as printed word meanings go.

A number of questions, however, immediately arise which this study cannot hope to answer. How much does the individual read into the pictures when he does not know the word meanings? What impressions and conclusions does he take from the drawings?

One of the frequent alibis given by the pupils to justify the low scores was: "Oh, I do not read the comics very carefully, I

spend more time looking at the pictures." If this is the practice of many it becomes a question as to what is derived from them in ideals, attitudes, and behavior standards. Do young people read into these pictures their wishes and desires, and then use the comics for rationalization purposes? This then becomes a very important question when we realize that more than 25% of the comic strips included in this study contained criminal inferences or suggestions. If so, what can be expected as outcomes?

Furthermore, there has always been some question as to how many of the slang expressions and slang spellings carry over. Even if only a very few of them do so, there can be no advantage in it.

## \* \* \* FINDINGS \* \* \*

**LATIN:** In 100 Maine high schools that offer Latin, only 54% of the students who complete Latin I continue in Latin II, says Mary C. Copeland in *Maine Teachers' Digest*. One high school reported that more than 85% of its student body was enrolled in Latin classes. Five other schools said that from 50 to 60% of their students were enrolled in Latin. But in the median high school, 13% of the students were in Latin classes. In 30% of the schools, Latin-class enrollments were from 1% to 9% of total enrollments.

**SCIENTISTS:** The need for leadership in human and scientific affairs has never been more critical; potential talent for these fields should be salvaged and guided toward college; and high-school teachers

and counselors are in a key position to do it. So states Lowell H. Hattery in *School and Society*, offering in proof the findings of two recent studies.

The American Economic Association asked 50 professors of economics to provide names of 5 especially able students who had been in their classes during the previous 10 years. Asked what had turned their interests to economics, 73 of the former students reported teachers as important factors—and of these influential teachers, 33% were high-school teachers. In a study of 873 notable scientists, S. S. Visser found that 59% had made their decision to become scientists before the age of 19. The following per cents of the able scientists had made their vocational choices before the age of 18: chemists, 60%; astronomers, 48%; mathematicians, 40%; zoologists, 31%; and physicists, 29%.

**FAMILY:** Inclusion of a course on "Family Life" in the high schools of Youngstown, Ohio, was favored by 63% of the seniors in the city's high schools, according to a survey made by Paul C. Bunn, states the *New York Times*. Some 27% of the seniors didn't favor such a course on the grounds that family-life education was the responsibility of parents. And 10% thought that both the schools and the home should share the responsibility in this area.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Good, bad, indifferent or important, there is a great amount of counting studies and other research going on in the field of education. We think readers will be interested in brief, unqualified summaries of some main points in some of the findings. Lack of space prohibits much explanation of methods used, degree of accuracy or conclusiveness, and sometimes even the scope of the study.

# GUIDANCE AIDS

## *for incoming* FRESHMEN

By  
LAURENCE G. MASON

EDUCATIONAL FAILURES are costly—costly in terms of increased budgets but far more costly to the individual who fails. This is particularly true in the case of the growing youngster, who is so impressionable. As educators, we must give maximum assistance to all students who are faced with the necessity of making decisions.

It was apparent that we were not adequately meeting this responsibility toward our eighth-grade students who were about to enter high school. These students had had no opportunity for school experience in the area of homemaking, shop, or commercial work, and only a limited opportunity in the fields of music and art. Yet, at the end of the eighth grade they were expected to choose one of six courses of study—commercial, art, technical arts, homemaking, civic (general), or college preparatory—which they would pursue for the next four years. With the cooperation of

an interested faculty and student body, we have attempted to take steps toward improving this process.

Members of the photography club of the senior high school prepared colored slides showing various classroom and extracurricular activities which are a daily part of the school program. These pictures started with an eighth-grade graduation exercise and ended with a picture of senior-high-school graduation. Eighth-grade students and their parents were invited to attend an evening meeting at which these slides were shown. The showing was followed by a general discussion on the various courses offered in the senior high school. At the conclusion of the discussion time was allotted for questions from the floor.

The second step was to invite each eighth-grade student to spend a day at the high school. This visit was arranged by schools, with a maximum of sixty visitors for any one day. Upon arrival, the students were divided into groups of approximately fifteen each. Two upper-class students, or one student and an eighth-grade teacher, acted as guides for each group. As a group approached a classroom, the guide was instructed to check with the teacher to make certain that it was convenient for the students to visit at that time. All students visited both college-preparatory and non-college preparatory classes. Both boys and girls visited all departments, including homemaking and shop.

As a third step, representatives of the guidance department visited the eighth-grade homerooms in the respective schools.

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### EDITOR'S NOTE

*An important part of the guidance program of Stratford, Conn., High School is the four-step system of providing eighth-grade students who soon will enter high school with information that will help them to make the proper choice among the courses of study. Mr. Mason, who explains the plan and its importance, is director of guidance of the Stratford Public Schools.*

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At this time descriptive material about the various courses offered in the high school, together with a copy of the high-school handbook, was presented to each student. Again an opportunity was offered the students to ask further questions.

As a fourth and final step, an individual conference was scheduled at the local elementary school for each of these students. This conference was scheduled within a week or ten days after the counselor visited the school. A notice of this appointment was sent to the home, and either or both parents were invited to accompany the student to this conference. At this time the parent and/or student was offered a further opportunity to ask questions of particular interest to him. At the conclusion of the conference the student was expected to make his final selection of the subjects which he wished to pursue in high school.

We have followed this program for two years. We have made many changes, and we expect to continue to do so if such

changes help to improve the calibre of service which we can offer. It has been interesting to note that during the second year the number of parents attending both the evening and individual conferences has showed a remarkable increase.

It is our opinion that such a procedure offers both the home and the school many advantages. Some of these are: an opportunity to (1) exchange valuable information which should help both the home and school to do a better job of guidance, (2) evaluate past progress of the individual and give serious consideration to areas of strength and weakness, particularly as these factors effect the individual's final choice, (3) discuss the future educational and vocational plans of the student, (4) offer to the incoming freshman a personal contact with someone whom he will know when he enters high school in September. This last advantage is very important, particularly in the first few months before the pupil has had an opportunity to gain a feeling of security.



## Is the Coach a Good Teacher?

High-school football has a tremendous influence upon a large number of boys. School officials, alert to this fact, should be able to use this means for strengthening the education of each one of these youngsters. The aura of crowd adulation, for example, affects some boys unfavorably. An observing coach, if he had any idea of accepting such a responsibility, could make this experience contribute beneficially to such youngsters. Aside from the concomitant values is the instruction the boys receive which influences their playing.

How different the atmosphere surrounding the football coach as compared with other teachers in the school. He enjoys unlimited freedom from any supervision of instruction. No other teacher would be permitted such immunity. At present, very little can be done about it. The principal difficulty with evaluating instruction at football practice is the fact that too few educators know much about it. They make very little effort to familiarize them-

selves with principles and methods of instruction as they apply to this kind of an educational activity, while they would be justly offended if it were intimated that they were unfamiliar with methods employed in classrooms.

No matter how competent the coach, there should be some machinery for coordinating his activities with those of his fellow teachers. This is in keeping with good organization of a school in a democratic society. Unfortunately, this condition cannot be corrected immediately. It will take time for school-committee members, superintendents of schools, high-school principals, and coaches to comprehend one another's responsibilities in relation to this problem. A solution will never be reached if each group continues, as it does now, to meet separately on all matters pertaining to education. The remedy is an occasional joint meeting to discuss common problems.—STARR M. KING in *The Massachusetts Teacher*.

# ALICE *in* PANEL LAND

*"What did you want settled, anyway?"*

By WILLIAM M. LAMERS

"The time has come," the Walrus said,  
"To talk of many things;  
"Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—  
"Of cabbages—and kings—  
"And why the sea is boiling hot—  
"And whether pigs have wings."  
—Lewis Carroll

NO SOONER HAD he spoken than the Cheshire Cat suddenly began to emerge, whiskers first.

"That calls for a panel discussion," he grinned.

"A what?" asked Alice, who had been listening to the Walrus and the Carpenter. And even as she spoke, there they were: the Queen, the Mock Turtle, the Dormouse, the Mad Hatter, the Gryphon, and the White Rabbit.

"A panel discussion," said the Queen. "Haven't you heard about group dynamics?"

Alice was on the point of saying "No" but the Queen glared so hard at her that she was afraid to confess her ignorance and said nothing. After a moment on a gesture from the Queen they sat down, all except the Cheshire Cat.

The Queen rapped for attention, pounding on the baby's head with a tablespoon.

"The first speaker on our panel will be Alice," she announced.

They all beamed at Alice expectantly. Alice rose looking perplexed.

"What am I supposed to do?" she asked.

"Talk," said the Queen.

"On what subject?" asked Alice.

The Mock Turtle wiped his eyes and sobbed, "We do not start with a subject. We talk until we have found one."

"But do you really find one?" asked Alice.

"Of course," said the Queen impatiently.

Alice began to say, "But that doesn't seem the sensible way," when the Mad Hatter interrupted.

"Don't argue," he said, and poked her hard with his umbrella.

"Ouch!" cried Alice.

"A pointed observation," said the Queen.

"A very pointed observation that succeeding speakers may well keep in mind."

The Mock Turtle raised a flipper. All eyes now turned on him. He stood up, drew a linen handkerchief from his pocket, wiped a tear from his left eye, and said, "I wish I did not feel so soop-erior." Then he burst into loud weeping.

Alice giggled and the Queen rapped her sharply over the knuckles with the baby's rattle.

"Quiet," she screamed.

"Quiet," echoed the Walrus. And Alice thought his voice sounded like something out of an empty barrel. The Queen frowned at him.

"And now, the contribution of the Dormouse," she continued.

The Dormouse rose, cleared his throat, and with piping voice began, "Ladies and gentlemen—"

But here the Queen interrupted.

"Thank you for that unique biological observation. We will incorporate it into our common thinking," she said grandly. "We certainly are settling matters in the democratic way."

"But where are we going?" asked Alice.

"La," shouted the Walrus. "Who cares? Do you always know where you're going?"

"No," answered Alice politely. "Do you?"

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Surely there is hardly a single reader of THE CLEARING HOUSE who hasn't been present as listener or participant in many panel discussions. Let readers judge for themselves how vulnerable an Achilles heel the panel method has, and how true a marksman Mr. Lamers is as he sends his satirical darts at the heel. He is an assistant superintendent of the Milwaukee, Wis., Public Schools.*

The Queen looked at Alice and then at the Walrus.

"Don't pay too much attention to her," she said *sotto voce*. "And now, the Carpenter."

The Carpenter pushed his cap to the back of his head. "Well—" he said, and sat down.

"A deep thought," mused the White Rabbit.

The Cheshire Cat grinned. "Mice are nice," he purred.

"I *hope* you are learning something about panels," said the Queen to Alice. "Although *some* people never learn."

"I don't want to interrupt—" said Alice.

"Well, then, don't," said the Carpenter.

"But don't we get ready for something like this? Aren't we supposed to read books or something?"

"Heavens no," the Queen snorted. "As the saying goes, 'Too many books spoil the froth.'"

"That's wrong," thought Alice. "It's something like 'Too many spooks boil the moth.' Goodness, I'm all muddled up. But not half so muddled as these queer people are."

So she began to listen to the Walrus.

Alice had missed a couple of sentences but she caught his concluding remark, "To all of which I take the middle position and say yes and no."

The Queen nodded vigorously and ob-

served, "A wise moderation. And now it is probably time to form our collective judgment that we may implement the group will with the group mind. Are you ready for the question?"

They all nodded "Yes" except Alice, who was perplexed, and the Dormouse, who was sleeping.

"All those in favor—" began the Queen. Alice interrupted.

"Will someone please tell me what the question is?" she cried helplessly.

"Confusion confounded," shouted the Queen. The baby began to bawl. "What is the question? Isn't that a question? Why don't you vote on *that*?"

Poor Alice's head began to spin. "But that isn't *the* question," she stammered.

"*The* question and *a* question," shouted the Queen. "Your muddleheadedness will drive me mad." And for a moment, she turned her attention to the baby.

"Vote affirmative," said the Carpenter softly to Alice. "We always do when we have a panel. Nothing happens anyway."

The rest grinned at Alice.

"Isn't this fun?" squeaked the Dormouse, waking and stretching.

"You weren't listening," said Alice.

"I was, I was," he shouted. "But being on a panel is so easy I do it with my eyes closed."

"Quiet," shouted the Queen, and Alice thought she was going to add, "Off with her head." But instead she continued, "All those in favor, say *aye*."

Alice, although a well-mannered girl, was now beginning to grow angry.

"For the last time," she said, "in favor of what?"

The Queen's exasperation rose too. "May I ask you a question?" she said. "Would you rather be *in* favor or *out* of favor?"

"Of course I would rather be *in* favor," said Alice.

"Then vote that way," said the Queen. And she took the vote.

With that, they formed hands and danced in a ring, that is, all except the Queen and Alice. The Queen looked down her nose at Alice.

"That settles it," she said with satisfied finality.

"Settles what?" said Alice, stamping her foot and trying desperately not to cry out of pure vexation.

"What did you want settled, anyway?" said the Mad Hatter as he swung his partner.

"I didn't know," said Alice.

The Queen snorted, "And you still don't know. At least *that's* settled."

Alice's head began to spin. "But that isn't what I mean," she began.

"Well," said the Cheshire Cat as he began to fade, "if *she* won't or can't say what *she* means she can't expect us to settle anything for *her*."

By now the dancers had winded themselves and they sat down.

"A most successful panel, a most successful panel," observed the Gryphon, who had been a respectful listener up to now. "Even more successful than the one we had last week. More sharing, more specifics, more group dynamics."

And now all of a sudden Alice began to spin around and around.

Then she noticed the Queen. The baby was back in her arms. No, it was a little pig and as the Queen tickled it, it waved its pink feet and squealed.

"That at least makes sense," thought Alice. "Now I know why they say that babies squeal."

But the spinning grew more rapid until, try as Alice would, she could not think. Suddenly she realized that she was in a small boat rowing slowly upward out of a whirlpool toward a circular patch of light.

"Oh, dear," she thought, "What *will* I do now?"

But then she stopped worrying almost as soon as she started.

"I'll call a meeting of whoever and whatever lives wherever I come out, and I'll organize a panel. Because the nice thing about a panel is the fact that if all the people in it know nothing, when you add them all together, you'll get all the answers by talking and taking a vote."

With that, she tied the boat to a tree and said to the Dodo who looked out at her from behind it, "Good morning, sir, and have you had a discussion today?"



## Give Them More Opportunity to Make Mistakes!

A couple of years ago I was in a beautiful school building. It had an ornate tower with an attractive tower room. The principal had been petitioned by the seniors to have the tower room designated as the "Senior Room," where seniors would be free to gather and study or talk or lounge. Everything went along all right until one day the principal dropped in and found some seniors who were conducting themselves in a manner that did not meet the standards of good behavior. He sent all the members from the room, locked it, and issued an order that henceforth the Senior Room would be closed.

When the principal related the incident to me, I asked him if we might visit the algebra class. In the course of the visit I asked the teacher how many of the students turned in perfect work each

day, and the number she reported was surprisingly small. I turned to the principal and asked him why he did not close the algebra class for the same reason that he had closed the Senior Room. The seniors had made a mistake. The algebra students made mistakes. The only logical procedure then would be to close the algebra class also, for in that way he would prevent further mistakes in algebra!

Schools need to set up more and more opportunities such as the Senior Room referred to, so that young people will learn how to avoid making mistakes that are to the detriment of a group. Closing off situations does not educate. We cannot expect people to participate in correcting community evils unless they have experience in doing so in their own immediate community, the school.—HAMDEN L. FORKNER in *Teachers College Record*.

# 7 ways of helping students to Understand TEACHERS

By  
ARTHUR HOPPE

PUPILS WHO understand their teachers profit more from their learning experiences. This is true for every pupil, regardless of age or grade or intelligence or anything else. It is true wherever teachers and students come together to learn.

It has been emphasized elsewhere that successful teachers understand the learners with whom they work, so the main purpose of this article is to draw attention to the importance of *helping pupils understand teachers*, and to suggest a few implementing procedures. Living and learning is more pleasant and more fruitful when the people who are working together know and appreciate one another. Since the teacher is the mature leader in the learning situation, it is mainly his responsibility to help his pupils achieve such understanding. There are several ways in which this may be done.

1. *Help your pupils become acquainted with you.* Every teacher is something of a stranger to his group at first. Each teacher is unique as an individual and highly complex. He has his own special set of abilities, interests, needs, values, past experiences, and emotional patterns which make him different from any previous teacher his pupils might have known. The teacher can help his pupils gain insight into these things by being himself, by being friendly, by talking informally with his pupils about favorite sports or pet peeves, for example; by joining in some of their games or recreational affairs; by letting pupils understand that he is genuinely

interested in them. Interest begets interest. As the teacher becomes better acquainted with his pupils, they come to understand him better.

2. *Help your pupils appreciate your interest in teaching.* The teacher can put his main professional purposes into simple language. He can show what he is driving at and he can tell why he considers his work to be important. Certainly he can avoid grumbling or whining about the conditions of his work. He understands better than pupils do what the school is striving to achieve in the community. He appreciates the mandate of parents and the aspirations that adults generally have for the young. He knows that living and growing and learning are inextricably woven together; that they *can* constitute a grand stimulus for every individual; that it is his special privilege—his chosen task—to make this venture grand for pupils, to help them see it and equip them to meet it.

This attitude is not best conveyed by words, though words may help. More will depend upon the actions of the teacher, his attitudes, his interest in and concern for his work and his pupils. Granting a high quality of teacher behavior in these areas, pupils will readily grasp the teacher's feelings for teaching—and for them.

3. *Help your pupils understand your point of view.* Every pupil appreciates knowing where his teacher stands on pertinent issues. Pupils strive constantly to develop clearer meanings, to understand better the world about them and their relationship to it. They profit a great deal



from the considered opinions and the guidance of mature teachers. Students may find it difficult to say so, but they really want this help.

The alert teacher is a careful student of the culture and especially of the immediate community in which he works. A sound knowledge of the pertinent factors operating in difficult situations is part of his professional equipment. It is his responsibility to society and to the community to see that his pupils consider all the facts and all the factors in such situations, that they do this with deep concern for the personal freedom and development of all individuals and for the collective welfare of all the people in the community.

The teacher who shares his knowledge of everyday problems with his pupils discharges one of his main functions as teacher—that of helping youngsters understand their world. He also provides thereby one more avenue through which they can come to understand him better.

4. *Put yourself in your pupil's shoes.* Imagination is an important aid in understanding others. The effective teacher assumes a positive attitude toward his pupils. He realizes that they want to respect his authority and come to him for help and guidance. But he understands also how independent pupils often seem to be—and want to be. It is embarrassing to have one's shortcomings exposed in public.

Above all, the teacher appreciates the importance of human dignity and shows due respect for the personal freedom and integrity of his pupils. He never hesitates to help them search for knowledge and understanding, but in the search, he never underestimates their intelligence or their potential for growth. Regardless of the difference in their ages, the teacher who considers his group in this light will be rewarded with sincere respect and appreciation from his learners. And this is basic to understanding.

5. *Encourage pupils to visit with you.* Pupils are people; they enjoy being sociable; they sorely need to be accepted and wanted by other folks. They want recognition and praise, and they flourish best in a friendly atmosphere. They respond well to teachers who show that they have the best interests of their pupils at heart.

The friendly teacher will recognize his pupils as persons in and out of school. He will deliberately show interest in them and strive to be available when they want to talk with him. He will feel free to discuss problems or pleasantries—as they choose. He will not appear overly shocked by what pupils may say. He will bring his careful attention and mature judgment to bear wherever this seems warranted. He will show by his behavior, especially by his help, that he *does* have the best interests of his pupils at heart. This requires much time, patience, and sincere concern on the part of the teacher. Pupils are not easily deceived; they rarely show interest in teachers who do not show some friendly concern for them in turn.

6. *Help pupils understand restraints they must accept.* Every one of us must submit to rules and regulations and demands of one sort or another. People normally conform to reasonable demands, in their group living from day to day. It is when demands

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

*A great deal has been written about ways and means by which teachers can reach a better understanding of students. Now Mr. Hoppe suggests that understanding is a two-way street. He points out seven ways in which teachers can give the student a better understanding of themselves, their work, and their ideals. The author is an assistant professor in the School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind.*

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are not reasonable, or when their reasonableness is not understood, that protests arise.

Teachers in school can do a great deal to prevent such situations: First, by seeing that demands made upon pupils *are* within reason; second, by helping them recognize *why* the demands are necessary and how they contribute to pupil welfare in the long run; third, by providing appropriate outlets for the tensions created by those demands which prove difficult for pupils to accept gracefully. When the teacher does his best to help students understand whatever restraints they must accept, student understanding of the teacher is significantly enhanced.

7. *Promote teamwork in your groups.* Cooperation is the key to successful teamwork. Strong cooperation depends upon the extent to which each member in the group *wants* to do his level best and is *free* to do it. In learning, both of these factors depend largely on the teacher. It is he who sets the tone of the group. The thoughtful teacher will let each pupil know that his presence in the group is recognized and appreciated. He will help each pupil understand that *his* participation especially is wanted, that *his* contribution is important. Each pupil should be made to realize that the work of the group will be less significant if he does not add to it the full measure of his own interest and effort.

At the same time, it should be remembered that students generally are enthusiastic in their participation in those enterprises where they themselves have had a

significant role in formulating the major purposes, where they see close connections between their own needs or interests and the activity at hand, where they can take active part in carrying the activity forward, where they too can help gauge the outcomes and share in the rewards of their enterprise.

When teacher and pupils work thus together in experiences which they mutually hold valuable, warm feelings of acceptance and security permeate their group. These are the requirements for freedom to create and eagerness to share. In the sharing of creative experiences, people learn to understand and appreciate one another.

All the merit of this process is lost, of course, when the students' close understanding of their teacher works to the disadvantage of the teacher. In other words, it presumes that the teacher has nothing to lose in being well understood. This presupposes a teacher whose own balance and scholarship and integrity are of a high order, whose sincere interest in his work and in his pupils is beyond question. When such a teacher joins the team with his pupils, the group readily develops basic goals and plans in common; they work together in a friendly atmosphere and they come to know and appreciate one another very well indeed. They tend to be happier in their mutual enterprise. They become more efficient and more successful in their work together. These are the lasting benefits of helping pupils to understand their teachers.



### Calling Dr. Malthus

Three-quarters of the world's population go to bed hungry every night—in this age of science. And every morning for breakfast we have 55,000 more mouths to feed than we had the day before. These

are the latest estimates provided by the United Nations and the Food and Agricultural Organization.—HOMER KEMPFER in *School Life*.

# What Can We Do ABOUT WOMEN?

By

KENNETH V. LOTTICK

ON MARCH 14, 1835 the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* directed its literary wit against the current innovation of degree granting in institutions for women's "higher education." Availing themselves of editorial license, the editors, after reporting the latest news item, let imagination soar as follows:<sup>1</sup>

... The Kentucky Legislature has conferred upon Messrs. Van Doren's Institution for Young Ladies in Lexington the charter rights and standing of a College. . . . A Diploma and the honorary degrees of M.P.I. (Mistress of Polite Literature), M.M. (Mistress of Music), and M.I. (Mistress of Instruction) may be given.

Then an editorial addendum:

Other degrees suggested from this quarter may be M.P.M. (Mistress of Pudding Making), M.D.N. (Mistress of the Darning Needle), M.S.B. (Mistress of the Scrubbing Brush), and (above all) M.C.S. (Mistress of Common Sense).

The Professors should be chosen from Farmer's wives and the Laboratory should be a Kitchen. Then honorary degrees might include H.W. (Happy Wife), H.H. (Happy Husbands), and M.W.R.F. (Mother of a Well Regulated Family).

Smile if you will, but much recent writing also concerns the psychological position of today's woman. Ferdinand Lundberg and Marynia F. Farnham, M.D. in *Modern Woman, the Lost Sex*<sup>2</sup> and Ordway Tead in *The Harvard Educational Review*<sup>3</sup> stress the inherent sex difference. Mr. Lundberg

highlights modern woman's difficulties in daily life while Doctor Tead discusses the necessity for revision of the curriculum in women's higher education.

Moreover, while it is trite to recapitulate the number and position of women in both public and private professional education, it is quite patent that the schools are the last place in which feminine neuroticism should be allowed to introvert those with whom it comes in contact. This writer, in a questionnaire study of persons taking part in a graduate program in education, found a miserable lack of responsibility and interest in community matters on the part of those seeking the Master's degree, the majority of whom were women.<sup>4</sup> Contrariwise, the feminine instinct for human relations should be capitalized upon and allowed to reach its proper maturity.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth V. Lottick, "Professional Education and Social Responsibility," *School and Society*, July 2, 1949, pp. 6-8.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dr. Lottick sees evidences of a return to an idea of a century or so ago—that colleges should develop special curriculums adapted to the particular capabilities and emotional needs of women. But such curriculums will be far from the kind that led in 1835 to the degree of "Mistress of Polite Literature." For one thing, where would you find any polite literature nowadays? Dr. Lottick is associate professor of education at Willamette University, Salem, Ore.

<sup>1</sup> Vera M. Butler, "Education as Revealed by New England Newspapers Prior to 1850," p. 147 (Doctor's Thesis, Temple University, 1935). Quoted in Newton Edwards and Herman G. Richey, *The School in the American Social Order*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947, p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> New York, Harper, 1947. *Passim*, but especially Chapters I and VI.

<sup>3</sup> "Women's Higher Education," *The Harvard Educational Review*, Summer 1947, pp. 151-61.

Thus the college program should be elastic enough to provide for the special needs of this sex. The New York *Herald Tribune* reports "a gradual but distinct trend toward technical and professional studies (suited to their special interests and aptitudes rather than those of men) in higher education for women."<sup>5</sup> Dr. James Creese, President of Drexel Institute of Technology, thus concludes:<sup>6</sup>

... In this country the character of higher education for women is bound to be modified as new professional opportunities open for women in industry and in business. . . . (And) when one reflects on the responsibilities of the manager of the modern American home one realizes that applied science has changed all our ways of living, in the home as well as in the manufacturing plant.

Thus, the duties of modern woman become more manifold:

... In her free time she must do what she can to improve the minds of her husband and her children. She must be prepared for these and for other responsibilities—personal, civic, and social—which make her life compensating and significant.

Historically education for women has not sought out their special capabilities and emotional needs, according to Dr. Creese:

Women's colleges, in their comparatively brief history, have commonly accepted the educational precedents of colleges for men. Hereafter they may be expected to offer courses of study and professional training more distinctly focused on the characteristic interest of women in the sciences of health, nutrition, sanitation, institutional management, and merchandising.

Moreover, women need not play in any sense a subservient role in modern American society. Dr. Tead suggests that the potential of women as a social force is even greater than that of men. He says:

... As women face out upon society, it is not

<sup>5</sup>Sunday, January 11, 1948: "Drexel President Says Women Are Turning to Technical Studies."

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

untrue to say that, on the whole, their influence can potentially be more meliorative, more constructive, more independent of economic forces, less hampered by a prudential point of view, more aesthetically concerned, than can the influence of most men in the same social position.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore it should be the business of the college or the university to arouse and commit its women students so that they become responsible and aggressive forces in community life. Tead again highlights the special position of women in society:

... If by virtue of their education, with consequent discernment of the total spiritual needs of our day, women can supplement and improve upon the limitations of vision and purpose in this man's world, the education of women will then be justified and will have higher meaning for them and for society.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly, it is less excusable that the female teacher and potential teacher be faultily trained and adjusted to play her proper role than it is for even the college-trained housewife. It may be inferred from Tead that courses which suggest social and personal responsibility are to be offered to more women. Likewise the "vocational" aspect is not absent, nor is the opportunity to exercise the peculiarly feminine approach to cooperative living. While graduate teachers college courses cannot rebuild a whole disorganized and thwarted personality, they may be able in some degree, to modify or re-orient inclinations which, carried to their logical conclusion, are vicious and wrecking to society at large as well as to the individual affected.

If the prevision of the editors of the Springfield *Republican* be extended to, and complemented with, the hindsight of a few of the leading commentators on the state of women's higher education today, their remarks may seem neither fatuous nor trivial; however, it may be presumptuous to credit them with such a social consciousness.

<sup>7</sup>Tead, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 161.

# Educational Shortages:

368 college seniors list things they wish they had learned in high school or college

By  
J. R. SHANNON

CLARE A. BRIGGS, late creator of the cartoon, "When a Feller Needs a Friend," never hit the bull's-eye more squarely than when he took a slap one day at requiring school children to study things for no better reason than that they might come in handy sometime.

In this particular masterpiece he showed a boy sitting at the table in a country dining room, boning over a geography by the light of a coal-oil lamp and saying, "Aw, I don't see any use in tryin' to learn this stuff." The boy's father, standing near by and dumping some coal into the heating stove, was replying, "Well, it might come in handy some day, Jamie—y' niver kin tell." Briggs's analysis of human nature was perfect; nobody ever needs a friend more than when studying something he cannot appreciate the need for knowing.

Alexander Inglis, in his *Principles of Secondary Education*, over thirty years ago pointed out as one of his famous four "fallacies" that of certainty versus uncertainty. Life is so full of a number of things that no one can ever hope to keep informed on all. He must dare to remain ignorant on many. Yet the curriculum is full of things the teachers don't try to defend on any better ground than that they might come in handy some day. If a subject or unit has intrinsic worth and value which pupils are certain to need to know, a capable teacher can make pupils appreciate it readily enough. Inglis's point was that much of the subject matter many teachers try to get pupils to learn cannot be so defended.

There are so many things high-school

pupils certainly need to know that there is hardly time for those which "might come in handy some day." If the thing is learned now and not needed until years later, the child will not know it when the time comes anyway. Other things being equal, one remembers only that which he uses. The might-come-in-handy-some-day philosophy is based on the filling-up conception of education. If one follows the leading-out conception of education, and keeps learning from day to day the things he needs to know for happy immediate adjustment, then when the "some day" comes, he probably will know already what he needs to know, and if not, he will have much more incentive to want to find out, and he will be more likely to know how to find out, than if he had spent his time drudging at cold-storage learning. How much happier high-school pupils could be in the learning

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Mr. Shannon asks a question: *Are we teaching some things in high school just in the hope that they "might come in handy some day," and failing to teach some other things that most certainly would come in handy some day?* For some of the answers to that question, he gave a questionnaire to thirteen classes of college students on things they felt a need to know but didn't know. He is associate professor of education in Sacramento State College, Sacramento, Cal.

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TABLE I  
THINGS WHICH 368 COLLEGE SENIORS FELT A NEED TO KNOW

Subjects or Topics (Felt Needs)	Frequencies		
	Male	Female	Total
Subjects often taught in high school.....	491	613	1,104
English.....	139	151	290
Music.....	40	61	101
Mathematics (mostly arithmetic).....	39	52	91
Natural science.....	50	37	87
Commerce.....	50	36	86
Home economics, personal dress, and care of clothes.....	13	66	79
Social studies.....	29	46	75
Physical and health education.....	28	30	58
Art.....	15	38	53
Foreign language.....	14	31	45
Industrial arts and mechanical drawing (largely home mechanics).....	30	9	39
Educational and vocational information.....	18	18	36
Geography.....	8	15	23
Bible.....	9	9	18
First aid and care of sick.....	3	12	15
Agriculture.....	5	2	7
Safety education.....	1	—	1
Social adjustments, etiquette, dancing, cards, etc.....	136	161	297
Enlightenment on sex.....	71	60	131
How to study, read effectively, use library.....	41	68	109
Sports and other worthy uses of leisure time.....	37	62	99
How to drive and care for an automobile.....	26	27	53
Politics.....	18	14	32
Personal financial management.....	14	17	31
Psychology.....	12	9	21
Common knowledge of medicine.....	9	5	14
Religion.....	5	8	13
Law.....	8	1	9
Monetary system and banking.....	1	6	7
Family relationships.....	3	4	7
Philosophy and ethics.....	3	3	6
How to judge people.....	2	3	5
Problems of racial justice.....	1	3	4
Education.....	1	2	3
Knitting.....	—	3	3
Photography.....	1	2	3
Parliamentary procedure.....	—	3	3
Stock-market operations.....	1	1	2
Plumbing.....	1	1	2
Names and addresses.....	1	1	2
How to build fires.....	—	2	2
How to comfort or reform people.....	—	2	2
The truth about Santa Claus.....	2	—	2
Postal rates and regulations.....	1	1	2
Twenty-eight other things by one person each (such as how to use a dial telephone, how to check baggage, how to write a telegram).....	13	15	28

process, and how much happier also in the applications of learning, if the time spent in might-come-in-handy-some-day learning were given to satisfying present felt needs!

In an effort to drive home to his students in Principles of Secondary Education the Inglis fallacy of certainty versus uncertainty, the writer struck upon a device which produced as a by-product the data of this re-

port. The students in each of thirteen classes in the course during a period of four years were told, after the Inglis fallacy had been considered, to hand in on the following day a list of things they could recall in the meantime which they had felt a definite need to know but did not know when the occasion demanded, and which they could have been learning with more

profit than some of the things they had in their school work. The students were asked to omit their names from their papers, since absolute frankness was desired. Just before the papers were handed in, the students were asked to state their sex on their papers.

The numbers of students responding in the thirteen classes were 49, 29, 19, 22, 34, 30, 22, 28, 32, 28, 21, 32, and 22—a total of 368. In translating the things the students listed, and in classifying them under uniform headings, only one tally was given for a student under a particular heading, regardless of how many things he listed which belonged under the same heading. The original tabulations were subdivided more minutely than shown in Table I, however. Grammar and rhetoric, literature, vocabulary, spelling, handwriting, public speaking, and dramatic art, for example, were first kept separate but later combined under *English* in Table I. A single student could have had one tally under each of these subheadings.

#### NOTICEABLE CORRELATION

Some details of the students' reports not shown in the table were: (1) a noticeable correlation between the things listed by students in one section and those in another, thus suggesting that the adding of data from other groups beyond the thirteen probably would not have altered the relative positions of the separate needs materially, (2) the top three major headings in the table were the only ones with frequencies reported by students in each of the thirteen groups. The table itself shows considerable agreement in felt needs between the boys and the girls, and those needs usually were of a very practical nature. For example, 39 boys and 37 girls listed public speaking, which the tabulation classified under *English*.

A few students overstepped the instruc-

tions and listed personality traits they wished they had acquired, but these were discarded in the tabulations. If needs for trait training as well as factual information were sought in the responses from the students, the device to illustrate the need of learnings for certain needs instead of uncertain needs would be still more impressive.

#### HIGH-SCHOOL SUBJECTS

The fact that the preponderance of students' felt needs for knowledge came under the heading of high-school subjects (first item in the table) might indicate one thing or it might indicate another. It may indicate that the present subject divisions in high school are approximately what they should be, but that the details of subject matter under these headings do not satisfy the students' needs. Again, however, it may be that the students were so steeped in the traditions of the present subject fields that they cannot recognize their needs well outside of them.

Assuming that the best approach to what to teach consists of teaching people to do better those worthy things they will do anyway, or want to do, or should do—not those which they might do some day—perhaps the next-best is the educational-shortages approach. The scientific method can never tell us what to teach, but the semi-scientific ones of interest and activity analysis and of educational shortages offer our best bases for opinions. The present survey employed the educational-shortages approach. In no case can we base sound decisions on what might come in handy some day. While learning things which might come in handy some day, a pupil is failing to learn things which are *certain* to come in handy. In the opinions of 368 senior-college students, the items reported herein are some examples of things they could better have spent their time in learning.

# "HAYWIRE" RECORDER

*Beginner learns how not to work it*

By SISTER MARY DE CHANTAL, R.S.M.

HAVE YOU bought your wire recorder? We have! You've seen them advertised: "Plays an hour's program without interruptions," "Use it in your English classes," "Rewinds at about 400 revolutions per minute," and more of the same. Well, before it will play an hour's program, the program has to be recorded. And before it is recorded, the machine has to be started.

All the directions are on a panel screwed to the machine. Correction—all the directions are there but one, and since the machine won't start unless you do all the preliminaries, matters are at an impasse. For the first few hours the number and variety of gadgets on the control board absorb your interest. There are knobs, levers, lights—so many things, in fact, that you are somehow reminded of an airplane, and half expect the thing to take off. But it doesn't; just the wire does. More of that anon.

By now your hands are drooping listlessly over the sides of the contraption, and suddenly they touch, quite by accident, the secret spring, and everything starts to go at once. The turntable spins madly, the recorder head jumps up and down, the light flashes desperate messages to the radio, and an ominous hum issues forth from its innards. You grab a spool of wire, put on your favorite record, and collapse, relax to the dulcet strains of whatever composer you think composes dulcet strains. According to the ads, it's child's play to record an hour's program. But don't be too ambitious. Settle for a fifteen-minute program at first. You'll live longer and have pleasanter dreams. So the fifteen-minute wire runs out in the middle of your super-favorite record,

but you don't mind. You can hum the rest.

Now to the rewind. After all, you can't play it back inside out. The idea is that it rewinds at five times the speed of the original movement, so you won't have to spend half of your life listening to Chopin in reverse. A fifteen-minute wire should be ready to play in three minutes. But after a minute and a half the thing breaks in the middle. No reason for it—it just breaks. What's more, it breaks so that you can't find the end.

Get out the scissors, a pin, and an ax (in case you get desperate), and roll up your sleeves. From here on in you'll need patience. You can tie the broken ends together, provided you can locate the ends. But you can't. So you break an end free and start to unwind by hand. An hour and 5,000 feet later you are in wire up to your shin bones, you have hacked a few pieces out of the cabinet, what with scrounging around with the trusty scissors, and the

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*After brushing a few stray pieces of wire recorder cabinet out of her hair, liberating herself from 5,000 feet of entangling recorder wire, and getting first-aid for her scratches, Sister Mary de Chantal is ready to tell you that the first encounter with a new recorder may be somewhat baffling. At the time you read this, no doubt, she has mastered the machine and is one of its staunchest supporters. The author teaches in Holy Name of Jesus High School, New Orleans, La.*

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wire ends (fine as a human hair, you are told) have bitten your fingers in at least fifty places. But never mind—you have a few feet of wire left that you got off onto the spool in your first few minutes of "beginner's luck." It will no doubt start in the middle of a concerto, but by now all you want is to hear some music, any music, that you have recorded.

So you thread the machine all over again and hang over it with a glow of anticipation lighting your haggard features. And are you now at last rewarded by soft

snatches of melody? You are not! All you hear is "Publius est agricola," and a few inane facts about his personal habits, delivered in slightly less than flowing diction. The Latin class used the recorder yesterday, and you forgot to turn the controls to "Record Wire" before you started your record.

But don't be discouraged. You can still play the radio. And if you haven't learned how to work your wire recorder, you have certainly learned a few tricks about how not to work it!

## Recently They Said:

### *Physical Ed. vs. "Coaching"*

Most physical-education programs in the modern high schools are obsolete, inadequate, and unsystematic. . . .

. . . in most cases the members of the physical-education staffs must coach all or a fair share of team sports after school. These extracurricular activities usually take up a great deal of time in preparation, many hours of actual coaching during the season, and in many cases without extra pay. The preparation for extracurricular activity occurs during the regular school day, thereby necessitating neglect of physical-education classes. Moreover, there is often a great deal of pressure upon the coaches from the people of the community in regard to having winning teams, and many coaches' jobs are in jeopardy by this pressure. Knowing this, coaches generally do their best teaching job, not in the physical-education classes, but with the teams they are coaching after school. . . .

Coaches agree that there are many more students in the non-sports group who need the benefit of sport education for enjoyment and carry-over value, but they hesitate to take time from their coaching duties to prepare adequate or even partial lessons for gym classes.—JOHN M. GIANNONI in *California Journal of Secondary Education*.

### *Why We Need Men*

How many of your children have a close relationship with a man? Our sociologists are concerned with the deterioration of family life. They tell us families are degenerating into individual related

people who may accidentally meet coming or going through the front door. A large percentage of our children don't have fathers. The war and the increasing divorce rate has left many children manless.

Can a man teacher fill this void? Maybe we can put in a word here or a remark there that might help that fatherless boy develop into a better young man with the high ideals all fathers would like their sons to have. A chance remark or an act of kindness by the man teacher may help that little girl see that all men are not brutal drunkards or shiftless no-goods as her mother has pictured her divorced father.—JESS R. BEARD in *Illinois Education*.

### *Precept and Practice*

Whatever the particular views of education may be—whether traditional or progressive—there can be little doubt that they would be unanimous about the aims of education. The list is well known—the development of the individual, training in critical thinking, cultivation of discriminating judgment, and preparation for citizenship in a democracy. Whether the schools succeed in achieving these aims need not be discussed here. What is important is that what the schools profess to do is counteracted by what children and youth know is going on in their own homes and in the communities of which they are members. It does not require much intelligence for them to discover that there is a break in gauge between school and society and that there is a conflict between precept and practice.—I. L. KANDEL in *School and Society*.



# SCHOOL NEWS DIGEST



Edited by THE STAFF

**PLANK:** During the recent British elections, according to the Associated Press, the student body of a school in Menston, England, held a mock election. One boy candidate ran on a platform whose No. 1 plank was "Hang all teachers." He was elected by a good margin.

**RATION TELEVIEWING:** "Marks have shown a splendid improvement since I suggested that parents ration their children's televiewing." That's what Charles M. Sheehan, a principal in the Clifton, N.J., Public Schools, reports in the *New York Times*. This is sound military strategy. If you can't rout the enemy, try to pin him down.

**STUDY ABROAD:** A total of 21,751 opportunities for foreign study, observation, and research are reported in the second annual edition of Unesco's international handbook, *Study Abroad*. The list of fellowships, scholarships, and grants-in-aid offers the clearest picture yet presented in the field of educational exchange. The U.S. is credited with creating and financing about one-fourth of the opportunities, but 52 other nations and 23 territories also are represented. Each study opportunity is listed separately. The 275 pages of tables give the awarding agency, the conditions and purpose of the grant, its value, where and when to send applications, and other pertinent information. About half of the awards are in unspecified fields, allowing candidates to set their own study purposes. The book is available from Columbia University Press for \$1.25. With a book like this, you can learn how to go almost anywhere to do almost anything. But what are we saying? Why should we encourage readers to desert us and chase off to Iceland or Afghanistan (both listed)? Do not buy this book.

**RIFLE COACH:** There's a good rifle team at Lincoln High School, New York City. For instance, in 1949, the team took first prize in the National Rifle Association City Championships, and second place in the New York State tournament. And you should see the faces of all the other coaches when the Lincoln team wins. Its coach is a woman teacher of commercial subjects in the school, Hazel Shapiro. She had never aspired to coach a rifle team, says the *New York Post*, as she didn't know which end of a rifle is up. But the school had an opening on the faculty for a teacher who would coach the sharpshooters. She took the job, and obviously she also took to rifles.

**ANTI-VANDALISM:** In the first 10 months of 1949, only 26,254 window panes in Chicago's public schools were smashed. Yes, we said "only." In the 12 months of 1946, before the Chicago schools' anti-vandalism, glass-saving campaign began, 60,799 school windows were smashed. It cost \$273,000 to replace them, says *Illinois Education*. For meritorious work in helping to reduce window breakage almost 50% in 1949, some 210 Chicago schools were given prize awards totaling \$24,000 worth of library books. Participating in the campaign were not only the pupils and teachers, but also PTA groups, service clubs, unions, business groups, newspapers, radio stations, and other groups. "The glass-saving, anti-vandalism contest," says Don C. Rogers, assistant superintendent of schools, "is an excellent school project. It reduces waste, builds up school libraries, helps school-community relations, and provides an appropriate civics project for the student councils." We can only report the results. We haven't the faintest notion what magic appeals were used to make school-hating boys and young men stifle their natural impulse to reach for a cobblestone when they pass a school. And so we must end on a note of mystery, which we hope by inquiry to clear up in a later issue.

**MENTALLY ILL:** Fully 10 per cent of U.S. school children have mental disorders, according to Dr. Luther Woodward, consultant of the New York State Mental Health Commission, as quoted in an Associated Press dispatch. To serve these students, says Dr. Woodward, we need 12,000 more clinically-trained psychiatrists, 12,000 more psychiatric social workers, and thousands of additional psychologists. Obviously it would take a great sum of money to cure some 3,000,000 mentally ill children. And nowadays the money is needed urgently to find better methods of blowing up 3,000,000 people.

**NEED ANY URANIUM?:** The Atomic Energy Commission will release for sale 200 pounds of uranium, and anybody who has an AEC license to purchase can buy some, says *School Science and Mathematics*. But don't let your science students build any false hopes. They can't make an atom bomb with it, because this lot is minus the necessary fissionable isotope 235. Somebody on the AEC probably remembered his own days in a high-school science lab.

(Continued on page 448)





## Five Road-Blocks to Practical Secondary Education

A PENETRATING and forthright article by Frances Rummell appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* for December 31, 1949, on "What's the Matter With Our High Schools?"

It is true, of course, that the professional educator who reads the article must begin by forgiving Miss Rummell and the *Post* for the pictorial illustration and its caption, "A few schools, like Newton High School, Massachusetts, have broken with tradition to teach such practical subjects as dressmaking." Dressmaking as a high-school subject may be a startling innovation in the vicinity of Boston, but most high-school girls would have to look to some other kind of school experience for a break with tradition. Oh well—in these days of television you have to do something to get the attention of the reader.

Nevertheless, the article throws the spotlight on the real "What's-the-matter." The experiences represented by the typical high-school curriculum are conspicuous for their lack of relationship to the later experiences of the majority of students. This state of affairs is largely the product of five factors: complacency, superficial analogy, dictatorship, snobbery, lack of experimentation.

*Complacency:* We don't have to progress to stay in business. The schools are here; the children keep coming; the parents keep sending the children to the schools. We should worry! The stimulation which a worker in another professional field feels is the kind of thing that passes most of us by. We spend a lot of energy rationalizing what we are already doing, in a spirit of

self-comfort and of salesmanship. The somnolent soon habituate and routinize the day's work; the energetic keep up a valiant struggle to get another ten per cent of value into the old stuff.

*Superficial analogy:* Stick to the fundamentals! Give them a good "foundation." In this we are encouraged by all sorts of people, particularly by those of our economic constituency to whom "fundamentals" sounds like something inexpensive. But—the individual is not built; he grows. That is a totally different kind of development. You do not bring a lad to maturity by piling up inert masonry; you nourish him.

The question is not how fundamental to human progress are the abstractions of this field of knowledge or that; it is rather what nourishment will ready him for the things he will have to do. Plane geometry is a realm of rigorous deductive reasoning in syllogisms about two-dimensional space; so, in order to prepare the youngster to reason about socialized medicine we have him learn to prove congruent two hypothetical and inconsequential triangles. Communication is one of the arts by which civilization lives and progresses; so we struggle to compel the students to shove Latin grammar down over the ears of the English language.

*Dictatorship:* The college-entrance pattern of "preparatory" subjects is not the outcome of an agreement between the colleges and the secondary schools; it is an imperial ukase. This means that, whatever else the high school does, it must make sure that this pattern is offered. When one

remembers that half our high schools have enrolments of fewer than 150, one understands why little else is offered. The admissions officers of the colleges are quite generally aware that these "preparatory" patterns have little validity; the influences which perpetuate the patterns are not clear. Selection is, after all, the chief consideration in assembling a student body; it should be possible to manage that without dictating the "preparation."

*Snobbery:* We who teach in the high schools are, after all, the product of college training. We emerge from four or more years of that, sold on the idea that such is the ultimate in human activity—and that those who can handle it are the elite. Without some experience more enlightening than what most of us get in the first few post-college years, our attitude toward the other 95 per cent of Americans may continue in need of revision. It is easy for us to feel that every student should struggle to get as much as possible of just what we had. This terrific variation in aptitude and in interest is one of the things about which we should have liked to make some suggestions if we had been present at the Creation.

*Lack of experimentation:* Our weakest point is our inability to find out what we accomplish. We are disposed to say, "We have concluded that this is what we should do by way of educating children; but don't ask us to demonstrate afterwards that we got what we expected." When we try a new procedure, we conclude our reasoning about it as soon as it reaches the point of being a definite hypothesis. There we put it into operation, admire it for a moment, then turn to a new conjecture. Thus we

omit comparison of results with hopes.

This much-needed addition to our techniques, dear industrialist friends, would cost money; but you are in the habit of spending money for experimental techniques. Two miles east of this desk is an R. C. A. experimental laboratory. It is bigger than most high schools and more expensively equipped and manned than any high school. It turns out nothing for sale; it spends its energies trying things. Those of us who purchase R. C. A. products pay the bill for that plant. We don't mind; we are grateful for the discoveries. Sooner or later you must get to the point where you will urge that sort of thing upon us; and we must get to the point where we will embrace the idea with glee.

It is to be hoped that the current Life Adjustment Education movement will result in positive, definite departures in curriculum. If not, it will be like the old-time "revival meetings," which stirred people to fever pitch for a short time and then left them more sinful than before. The projects which are a part of the movement should avoid generalities. They should have definite objectives, stated in specific terms and susceptible of comparison with results. No time should be spent in admiring the current plausibility of such projects; let evaluation be rather in terms of outcomes. Then let careful records be made, in order that other schools may also profit by the experiments. Thus we may be able to mend our curriculum ways before the public steps in to do it for us.

HEBER HINDS RYAN

Ass't Commissioner of Education  
State Department of Education  
Trenton, N.J.



School administration has been interesting, stimulating, thrilling. It has also been fatiguing, enervating, discouraging. There are times when there are three wrong roads from which to choose—the right road was closed long ago by others. The administrator has to decide which of these wrong roads to take. He has to accept criticism of all, even for things not altogether his fault; and yet he gets credit for good things he never did, good ideas he never had.—HENRY H. HILL in *Peabody Journal of Education*.

## BOOK REVIEWS

KIMBALL WILES and EARL R. GABLER, *Review Editors*

**U.S.A.—Measure of a Nation** (A Graphic Presentation of America's Needs and Resources), by THOMAS R. CARSKADON and RUDOLF MODLEY. Prepared by The Twentieth Century Fund. New York: Macmillan Co., 1949. 101 pages, paper bound, \$1.

Under copyright date of 1947, the Twentieth Century Fund published its monumental 800-page *America's Needs and Resources*, compiled by J. Frederic Dewhurst and 26 associates. Admittedly the most comprehensive study ever undertaken by the Fund, Dewhurst's volume presented "a careful estimate of America's human and industrial capacity and resources balanced against the probable needs and demands for 1950 and 1960."

Dewhurst's original volume proved to be a gold mine for the social-studies teacher to assay and to simplify; but it was obviously too academic, too detailed, and too expensive for direct classroom use. There was a patent need for a simplified, picturized, inexpensive version which could be more readily assimilated by John Doe and by the stu-

dents of our social-studies classes. In direct answer to this need, Thomas R. Carskadon, Chief of the Fund's Education Department, and Rudolf Modley have most ably selected, visualized, and condensed material from the 26 chapters of the original *America's Needs and Resources* and rendered it into the 21 sections of the popularized *U.S.A.—Measure of a Nation*.

Each of these 21 topics—such as "The Anatomy of Production," "What We Get and What We Spend," "Expanding Our Economic System," "Toward Finer Cities," "Our Natural Resources," "What Our Farms Produce"—where practicable has a brief evolutionary treatment, a current analysis as of 1947, and a projection of its development into the future. It is material which should be current for the next decade. The book's good print, concise yet flowing style, helpful headlines, and its two-color pictographs, sketches, charts, and ideagrams on practically every page set a new high for excellent, inexpensive texts in these days of high costs. (The cost in quantity is 80 cents a copy.)

This book is a "natural" as a basic text for the

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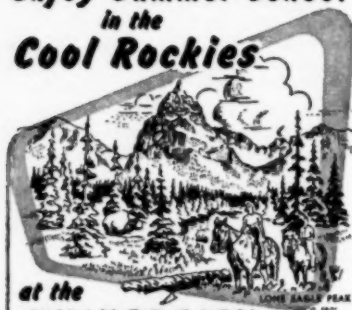
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12th-grade American Life course; it is an excellent supplement to the senior-high American history course; and it should be of some use even with ninth-grade social-studies classes.

Its faults for the teacher would seem to be that it is not available in a more durably-bound edition; that there are no study helps, or bibliographies, or index; and that it is susceptible to mistakes in prognostication, such as its statement on p. 10 that "as a practical matter immigration has all but ceased."

In short, however, it is the opinion of this reviewer that at least one class set is a *must* for every secondary-school social-studies department in the country.

CARLOS DE ZAFRA, JR.

John Marshall High School  
Rochester, N.Y.

*Guidance Handbook for Teachers*, by FRANK G. DAVIS and PEARLE S. NORRIS. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1949. 344 pages, \$3.50.

The controversy as to whether or not guidance is primarily a function of all teachers or of a group of guidance specialists has raged since student personnel work was first introduced as a part of the school program. The authors of *Guidance Handbook for Teachers* indicate clearly in the preface of their book that they belong to the former school; the content of the book, however, demonstrates the need for more highly specialized training than most classroom and homeroom teachers reasonably could be expected to obtain and for more time than ordinarily could be made available. The implication that guidance is merely an integral part of the school program to be carried out by all teachers under the supervision of the principal is refuted by the complexity of the techniques recommended; all teachers and all principals just do not have the interests nor the abilities to perform or to supervise technical guidance functions, nor should it be expected from them. It is regrettable that the authors did not recognize the place of the specialists and of the classroom and homeroom teachers as of equal complementary importance in realizing guidance objectives in the school.

The book provides motivation through frequent use of anecdotes, and those chosen are not uniformly good, for some read as mere fictions to prove a point. The somewhat loose use of terminology can cause confusion; for example, a "guidance clinic" is described as a conference of teachers on a case-study problem, even though it is admitted here that experts may be needed. In general the bibliographies are poor, for there is a serious omis-

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sion of many recognized standard works and the inclusion of too many periodical references which are not readily available to the ordinary classroom teachers.

The division of the book into units with the questions at the end of each unit suggests the use of the book by teacher-training institutions as a text in general guidance techniques; it has considerable material to recommend it for this purpose. The book also might serve to clarify the importance and meaning of functions ordinarily carried on by specialists; it has some use in a school using a decentralized functional guidance program for in-service training of teachers not on the guidance staff. For the small school, not able to employ guidance specialists, the book also affords aid, for if used it would tend to assure, at least, that a minimum of needed pupil guidance would take place. It must be stated again, however, that the book fails to prove the thesis of the authors and is, in the final analysis, just another addition to the too rapidly growing bulk of guidance reference works.

CARL C. SALSBUURY  
High School  
Millburn, N.J.

*Understanding the Constitution*, by EDWARD S. CORWIN and JACK W. PELTASON. New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1949. 147 pages, \$1.35.

Professors Corwin and Peltason have performed a useful service in preparing what amounts to a well-annotated presentation of our Constitution. It is organized as a running comment on each article, amendment, and significant section of that document.

The explanations are lucid and cogent. Footnotes are replete with references to Supreme Court decisions which have arisen out of constitutional issues. The earnest student, too, would look for a "fuller discussion in Corwin's *The Constitution and What It Means Today*"—an admonition appearing in the footnotes at least eleven times.

The book is a handy manual. It clarifies some of the subtle and more disputable sections of the Constitution. It notes, for example, that Congress does not have the power (under Article I, Section 8) to legislate for the general welfare; it has the power only to tax and spend for the general welfare. The authors point out that Madison argued in vain that Congress could tax and spend only in order to carry out one of its other granted powers. From the first the authors say Congress has interpreted this clause as being "in addition to its other powers." This is the kind of comment that will help the teacher and the student who are analyzing

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the Constitution to understand its many ramifications.

Professors Corwin and Peltason think that the proposed Lodge amendment would result in greater activity on the part of the Republican party in a state like Mississippi; they think too that the proposal would lessen the influence of strategically located minority states. Senators Taft and Wherry disagree. The unwary reader therefore should be warned that the comments present views of the authors (authorities to be sure) with whom other authorities may disagree.

MARY CLARE GALLAN  
W. C. Bryant High School  
Long Island City, N.Y.

*The Integrated School Art Program.* By LEON L. WINSLOW. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1949. 422 pages, \$4.50.

This is a thorough revision of a text for teachers in colleges and schools. Mr. Winslow presents a complete over-all picture of art education from the kindergarten to the college and provides a balanced program of art activities intimately related to life experiences. Especially valuable are the helpful and detailed plans and specifications for art education at the various levels. Some interesting ex-

amples of progressive art education as carried on in actual school systems are also presented. The list of readings, problems, and exercises is very complete. The book is crammed with exciting material for the art teacher and the prospective teacher in this field.

WILLIAM P. SEARS  
School of Education  
New York University

*Biology*, by FRANK M. WHEAT and ELIZABETH T. FITZPATRICK. New York: American Book Co., 1949. 571 + xxxvi pages, \$3.40.

This well-written text might be used in any biology classroom. The material is organized and presented in a fashion that makes it adaptable to slow or fast learners.

Each unit is preceded by an overview to acquaint the pupil with the phase of biology to be presented. Each problem in the unit is followed by a concise summary, a number of clearly explained exercises, a list of "other interesting things to do" requiring greater initiative, and questions to enable the pupil to evaluate his learning achievement.

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Yet even without legal assault, many [biology] textbooks used here are inadequate and evasive in their treatment of organic evolution. The names "Darwin" and "evolution" are anathema; there seems to be a tacit conspiracy to avoid their use in print.—*Laba and Gross*, p. 398.

The friction here was due to the fact that Miss Stone thought the school was organized for the benefit of the children, while Miss Wood and the Old Guard believed the school was operated to give them easy jobs.—*Leland S. March*, p. 401.

One common error often made by teachers is to confuse social adjustment among children with social adjustment between children and adults. It is perfectly possible for a child to achieve satisfactory relationships with his teachers, and yet fail to make himself acceptable to his peers.—*David C. Holtby*, p. 403.

Let's consider the story of Tom. Here is an example of how the staff learned about a student, respected his problem, and achieved a measure of success in helping him.—*William D. Carlson*, p. 406.

If we ever permit a testing program to take the place of understanding, loving, trusting, and comforting exchange of confidences either in the school—or, Heaven forbid, in the homes—may the good Lord help our children!—*Eileen Iberg*, p. 414.

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JAMES S. MALONEY  
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## SCHOOL NEWS DIGEST

(Continued from page 434)

**OVERSIGHT:** While studying for mid-term examinations, a student in a Michigan college suddenly discovered that he already had 9 more credits than he needed for graduation—and that he'd been an alumnus since the preceding June. Chagrined, says a United Press dispatch, he tossed away his books and went home. Let no reader snicker over our poor hero's odd lapse. Sometimes it's darn hard to know when you have received an education and when you haven't.

**FILM AGREEMENT:** The Unesco-sponsored agreement on removing restrictions on international transmission of audio-visual educational materials has been signed by representatives of 16 nations, announces the U. S. National Commission for Unesco. When 10 nations have ratified their representatives' signatures, the agreement will take effect. This agreement is one step in Unesco's effort to remove obstacles to the free flow of information and educational materials between nations. The 16 nations that have signed include the U.S., some Latin-American countries, and a number of the smaller nations of Europe and Asia. Other nations may join in the agreement if and when they wish. This is a small project among all of the big and tough problems of international getting together faced by the UN and Unesco. But even the most minor successes of the UN and Unesco deserve applause. Nations trying to get together constructively should be patted on the back, as you would encourage a backward child struggling with his ABC's.

**STRIKE:** An 11-day strike of special-subject teachers in New York City high schools against unpaid after-school extracurricular-activity work was given up temporarily pending a study of the problem, reports the *New York Times*. Special subjects include art, music, industrial arts, home economics, and health education. Teachers of these subjects are assigned after-school extracurricular activities on the grounds that their regular classes require less correction of written work and preparation of lessons than do the classes of the academic and commercial teachers. The teachers promised to resume their strike if no solution is reached.

**DIVERSITY.** Educators should not attempt to develop a "unifying philosophy" for the U.S., according to Dr. James B. Conant, president of Harvard University, as quoted in the *New York Times*. He called diversity of opinion "the first premise of our whole educational structure," and urged that schools and colleges encourage this diversity.

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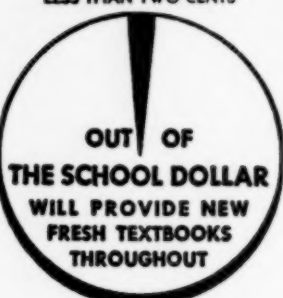
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